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MELVIN ARCA CENTER 141

(1971)



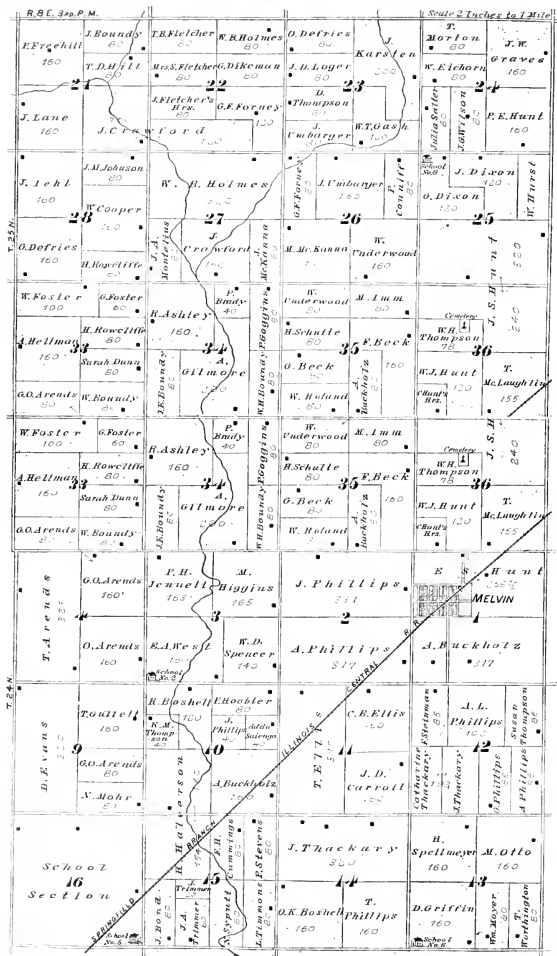








# MAP OF PEACH ORCHARD TOWNSHIP



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## CUSTOM FARM SERVICE, Melvin

# COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET



## MELVIN AREA CENTENNIAL

SEPTEMBER 3, 4, 5, 6 - 1971

**"A CENTURY ON THE PRAIRIE"**

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This page sponsored through the courtesy of

**MELVIN STATE BANK**

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 9, 1971

TO THE PEOPLE OF MELVIN, ILLINOIS

It pleased me to learn from Congressman Leslie Arends that you are observing the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of Melvin. It is an occasion of deep pride for you as well as for the nation.

The high purpose and vital community spirit that are reflected in your eventful history are in the best tradition of our American way of life.

Armed with these same qualities in the years ahead, I know that you will strive to be in the vanguard of constructive civic accomplishment. I welcome your full partnership in the demanding tasks we face as a nation, and in the good that promises to come from our united efforts.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Richard Nixon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "N".



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
SPRINGFIELD 62706

RICHARD B. OGILVIE  
GOVERNOR

To Residents and Friends of the Melvin Area:

I am delighted to offer to every citizen and friend in Melvin my congratulations and best wishes on your centennial.

Serving a prime agricultural area of the state, Melvin can enter its second century proud of its vital role on behalf of the food growers of our state.

Your hard work and fair dealing will, I am sure, make the coming years ones of great accomplishment and satisfaction for all concerned.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard B. Ogilvie".

Richard B. Ogilvie  
Governor

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, D.C. 20515**

September 1, 1971

Melvin Area Residents  
Melvin Area Centennial, Inc.  
Melvin, Illinois 60952

Dear Friends:

The 100th Anniversary of Melvin is a memorable event in which all of us take great pride. For us this is also a festive occasion, when we renew old acquaintances and reminisce about "the good old days" which have since become these "better days". We will laugh at our antics and rejoice in our accomplishments.

I was born and raised in Melvin. I fondly recall being one of the schoolboys "creeping like snail unwillingly to school". Vivid in my memory are my hectic Saturday nights clerking in a Melvin store when almost everyone for miles around came to town. There are many, many things of our life in and around Melvin that all of us will recall.

Being privileged to be a Member of Congress has kept me largely confined to Washington. My home is in Melvin to which I return as often as I can. My thoughts are like those of the poet whose words I have adapted:

"Washington is a man's town,  
there's power in the air.  
Paris is a woman's town,  
with flowers in her hair.  
It's great to dream of Venice,  
and it's great to study Rome;  
But when it comes to living,  
there is no place like home."

I look forward to seeing my friends and neighbors, old and new, as we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of our beloved hometown of Melvin.

Sincerely,



LESLIE C. ARENDS  
Member of Congress

## Centennial Officers and Board of Directors



Wendell Thackeray, General Chairman



Centennial Executive Board

Front row from left: Robert Hornickel, Kenneth Gravlin, Wendell Thackeray, John Clark, James Arnold.

Back row: Myrtle Hasenauer, Richard Chandler, Irene Shives, James Steinman, Marilyn Steinman, Ruth Donovan, Marian Boog, Dolores Clauss, Glenn Clauss, John Pool.

Hon. Leslie C. Arends  
President

Clyde E. Wilson, Sr.  
Vice President

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TERRY'S TRAILER SALES, Loda

CHAMPAIGN PRODUCTION CREDIT ASS'N.,  
Melvin

## Preface

This booklet attempts to capture the heritage of the Melvin area in written history and in photography. Through the work of more than thirty local historians, and especially that of the Premier Archivist, Miss Adelaide Dixon, we have tried to give the reader an insight into the first hundred years of this prairie town. And innumerable citizens have supplied pictures to make the background more meaningful.

Nevertheless, a present reader may find much that is already known to him, but all of it may be news to the reader of fifty years hence.

We express our gratitude for the many wonderful people who have helped to make this Centennial Booklet a reality.

William Walker, Chairman  
Commemorative Booklet



Aerial View of Melvin.



# A Village Is Born . . .

Melvin is a prairie town. Its roots are deep in the fertile soil from which it sprang. Unimagined wealth lay beneath the tall prairie grasses, undisturbed for centuries.

The Kickapoo Indians hunted and roamed over the "great prairies" long before the white man ever saw this part of the country. Many of their arrowheads, tools, weapons, and paint pots have been unearthed by the plows of local farmers. By 1840 most Indian tribes, through Congressional enactment, had been compelled to vacate their lands and settle west of the Mississippi River.

In the year 1830, when the first pioneers in covered wagons were making the long trek to points in northern Illinois across the part of the country where Melvin is now located, they traveled the old "Ottawa Trail" which led from Danville to Ottawa, Illinois. They came from the eastern states, many from Ohio.

This part of Illinois was a wilderness of prairie, with here and there a belt of timber fringing the streams. Pioneers thought that because there was nothing growing but prairie grasses, the land would

not be good for farming. They drove on to the rivers, the woods, and coal and lead mines of northern Illinois.

In 1855, Joshua Nicholson and his brothers, Elick and Alexander, came from southern Illinois with a thousand peach trees on their hayrack. They chose the rolling hillside five miles northwest of Melvin to plant the trees. The orchard was cultivated for a number of years; then the trees died and were never replaced. In 1868, when the new township was created, William B. Holmes and John S. Hunt, the first settlers, suggested that it be named "Peach Orchard."



Melvin Main Street about 1885. From the left - Doc Perry's Drug Store, J. A. Schafer & Co. and Henry Moore's Store (at the site of Mel's Market)



Pictured above are  
William B. Holmes and his wife.

William B. Holmes came from Georgetown, Vermilion County, in April, 1855. He was the first man to plow a furrow on the prairie sod of Peach Orchard Township when he broke ten acres of land. He also built the first house, and on May 29, 1857, the Holmes' daughter, Fannie, was born, the first white child born in Peach Orchard Township.

For about ten years very few people settled in this part of the country, called "grand prairie." Then, in 1867, John S. Hunt and John Woolsoncroft came from LaSalle County and purchased hundreds of acres of land for \$9.00 an acre. John S. Hunt built the second house in the township one-half mile north of the Melvin cemetery.

During the fall of 1867 and the spring of 1868, many families from northern Illinois came down the Ottawa Trail to Ford County. Among them were George Arends, Ties Arends, John Iehl, James Dixon, George Dixon, Joshua Umbarger, William Boundy, Gerhard DeFries, Isaac Day, and T. D. Thompson. Others were John Thackeray, W. T. Gash, George Phillips, William Lackey, George and William Foster, Henry Spellmeyer, Henry Rowcliffe, and John Underwood, followed by many others the next year. However, when the township was organized Sept. 15, 1868, there were only seventeen voters within its boundaries

The nearest towns to Peach Orchard Township were Loda and Chatsworth. Farmers would drive teams hitched to wagons to town twice a year for barrels of flour, sugar, crackers, and other groceries, to last six months or longer.

In 1870, word reached the pioneers that a railroad was to be built from Gilman to Springfield. When Enoch S. Hunt heard about it, he was instrumental in getting the railroad to be built across a part of Peach Orchard Township, through a section of his farm. He took sixty-five acres of his farm for a town site, made the original plat of the village, and also platted two additions to the town. It was surveyed at his request by H. J. Howe, county surveyor.



W. B. Holmes, holding W. C. Holmes,  
and his wife with their grandchildren  
and great grandchildren.



Pictured above are the Arends brothers who  
came to Ford County in 1870. Left to right -  
Ties O. Arends and George O. Arends.



Enoch Hunt in sulky.

Enoch Hunt dedicated the town July 18, 1871, naming it Melvin, in honor of the president of the Illinois Central Railroad. The first train came through that fall. All supervisors along the right-of-way were given two free tickets to ride the train to Chicago to view the ruins of the great Chicago fire of 1871. James Dixon III, who was the first supervisor of Peach Orchard Township, along with his wife, Jane Hunt Dixon, and their baby son, James IV, were passengers on that first train.

Early records show that other officials besides Mr. Dixon were W. H. Thompson, the first mayor; Henry Mohr, clerk; and John Hunt, tax collector. Those who served on the village board were A. L. Gedelman,



Enoch S. Hunt with his horse Alex on his farm by the Fairground.

Jacob Gedelman, J. S. Holverson, John Iehl, G. H. Whippy, E. E. Thompson, Albert Buchholz, Mike Bristle, George Iehl, and William Stathers.

A railroad station was soon built at the east end of Main street. T. D. Thompson was the first station agent, and his son, Clyde, was the first child born in Melvin. He built the first house in town, where Mrs. Frances Kenward's house now stands; in fact, some of the original foundation can still be seen.

One of the first business places in Melvin was a blacksmith shop, built by Si Sturenberg on west Main street. Mr. Sturenberg had come from Germany



Top left - Genevieve Kennedy and Mary Shreve. Bottom left - Dick Kennedy and Enoch Hunt. Four generations of the Hunt Family.

where he had learned the blacksmith trade and the making of farm wagons. His shop was always a busy place, especially in winter when he shod farmer's horses so they could haul shelled corn over the deep-rutted, frozen roads to the town elevators.



In upper right hand corner is Clyde Thompson, the first child born in Melvin.



Posed in Sunday best for picture taking are George Phillips and Glyde Boshell.



The first elevator located north of R. R. Depot, shown looking north to south.



George Beck is shown here in a typical farmyard of the 1890's.



Picture above is a view from the newer elevator, looking northeast.



Hannah Arends Otto poses in a cutter on a wintery day.



This is the old school house on Hunt street about 1896 where  
William Holmes' house now stands.

In 1871, John S. Hunt gave five acres of his farm for the Melvin cemetery. He chose the highest point of his farm, one-half mile north and one-half mile east of town, for its location. The first burial was the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard DeFries.

The first grain elevator was built in 1872 by Frasius, Iehl and Company. George T. Arends, father of Leslie C. Arends, was one of the owners. All grain had to be scooped by hand from the elevator into the grain cars for shipping.

John M. Thompson established the first farm implement business in 1874, which he operated until 1886. He sold out to his son, W. E. Thompson, who carried on the business with his uncle, W. H. Thompson.

The first Melvin schoolhouse was built on south Hunt street in 1875. In 1876, August Gould built a general merchandise store. Five churches were built before 1900: First Methodist, 1871; German Methodist,

1881; German Lutheran, 1873; Congregational, 1888, and St. George Catholic, 1880.

Melvin's first industry was a tile factory. It was built about 1880 on the south edge of Enoch Hunt's farm. There was a great need for tile, as farmers found the prairie sod wet and swampy. After operating for several years, the factory was destroyed by fire and never rebuilt. The only evidence of the factory now is the old tile pit, where youngsters still like to fish in the summer and skate on the ice in the winter.

Years ago farmers would come to town with their horse-drawn bobsleds and help saw huge cakes of ice from the tile pit. These were packed in sawdust and stored in an old building on Center street. In the summer, folks would buy chunks of ice for their wooden iceboxes. Many a freezer of homemade ice cream, using ice from the storehouse, was made for special occasions and for church festivals, held on a vacant lot and lighted by Japanese lanterns.



Shown above is Philena Chapple, star of the Jesse Colton show that played under a tent one week each summer on West Main Street where the James Shives home is now located.

Most of the entertainment of early days centered around the churches. There were oyster suppers, strawberry festivals, ice cream socials, Sunday School picnics, (held in Shilts grove south of Melvin), and Epworth League parties. Square dances, carpet rag sewings and quilting parties were held in the homes.

Spelling bees, cipher downs, programs, and box socials were forms of entertainment held in the country schoolhouses. In the early 1900's, medicine shows would come to town and perform in Hodges' hall. The Jesse Colton Show would come each summer and present stage plays in a large tent on the grounds where James Shives' house is now located. Some of the plays were "Ten Nights in a Barroom," "The Little Princess," "East Lynn" and others.

Winter was a time of snowball battles and ice skating on the old tile pit. The skaters warmed themselves beside bonfires built under the railroad bridge, and all the girls wanted to skate with Ollie Ofterdall because he was such a good figure skater. Enoch Hunt had a big bay horse, Alex, and a red cutter, and it was his delight to take all the little folks sleigh riding after school.

During the years clubs were formed and lodges were instituted. Among them was a Republican Woman's Marching Club, directed by Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Foreman, long-time school teachers in Melvin from 1880 to 1901. The ladies wore white dresses with blue ties and white hats, and marched along, singing "Old Billy Bryan, sitting on the fence, Trying to make a dollar out of forty-nine cents." They carried banners, "William McKinley for President." They often held big bonfire rallies at the east edge of Melvin, and drove horses and buggies to Chatsworth on one occasion, to take part in a big rally. One member, Mrs. Edna Dueringer, still resides in Melvin, and two other members were Mrs. Austa Boundy, now of Paxton, and Sylvia Hull Yarnell, Kankakee.

The Grand Army of the Republic was organized in 1885 by veterans of the Civil War. In 1890, its auxiliary, the Woman's Relief Corps, was established. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows was formed 1888; the Rebekah Lodge No. 337, 1894; Masonic Lodge A. F. & A. M. No. 811, 1891; and the Royal Neighbors of America in 1898. The Knights of Pythias were active in 1894.



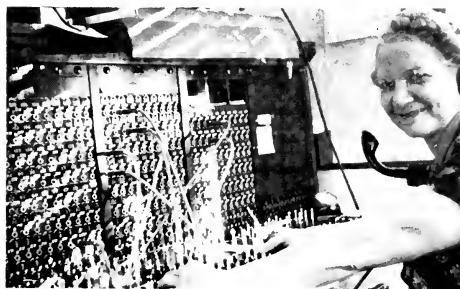
Hardy volunteers with scoop shovels are attempting to break up the huge snow drifts so the "powerful" machine in the background can finish the job.



Mr. and Mrs. Ben Kaufman and son, Ray.



This building housed the telephone office until the dial system was installed.



This old-time switchboard in the Melvin Telephone Office enabled the operator, usually called "Central", to know who you were and even where you were. Shown here is Mrs. Florence Wright who had her living quarters in the back of the office building.

In 1897, telephones were installed in Melvin. A telephone office, built on north Center street, was operated by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Kaufman. They also had a photographer's shop in the rear of the telephone office.

One early settler, Frederick Steinman, grandfather of Mrs. Henry Ficken, was a Civil War veteran. Three Melvin boys joined the armed forces during the Spanish-American War of 1898. They were John Miller, Claude Bookwalter, and Jacob Holverson. Another Spanish-American veteran, Frederick Howk, moved to Melvin later.



F. W. Steinman country home east of Melvin on present Kenneth Muehlenpfort farm.



Civil War veteran Frederick Steinman and wife, Louisa.

In 1899, J. A. Schafer and Amandus Buchholz built the first brick stores on Main street.



The above picture shows some of the growing pains of the town of Melvin as excavation begins in 1898 for the construction of the J. A. Schafer and Buchholz buildings.



The buildings in the background, on the south side of Main street, shown here, housed the Charles Groen shoe shop, extreme left, the grain office of Buchholz and Spellmeyer and, across Center street, the Thompson Machinery Co. and on the extreme right the "Drum" (T. D.) Thompson store.



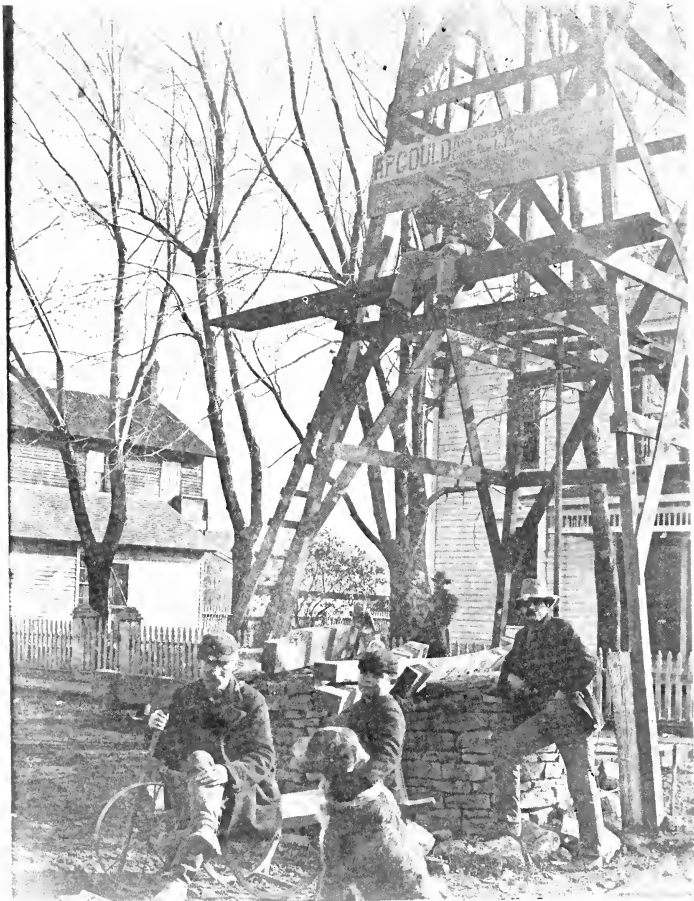


This front view shows the buildings' brick facing nearly completed, but no roof covering.



The finished product! Shown here by the trunk is Elmer Schafer, son of J. A. Schafer, pictured at the extreme right. Trunks were a new fad at the time.

## Town Well

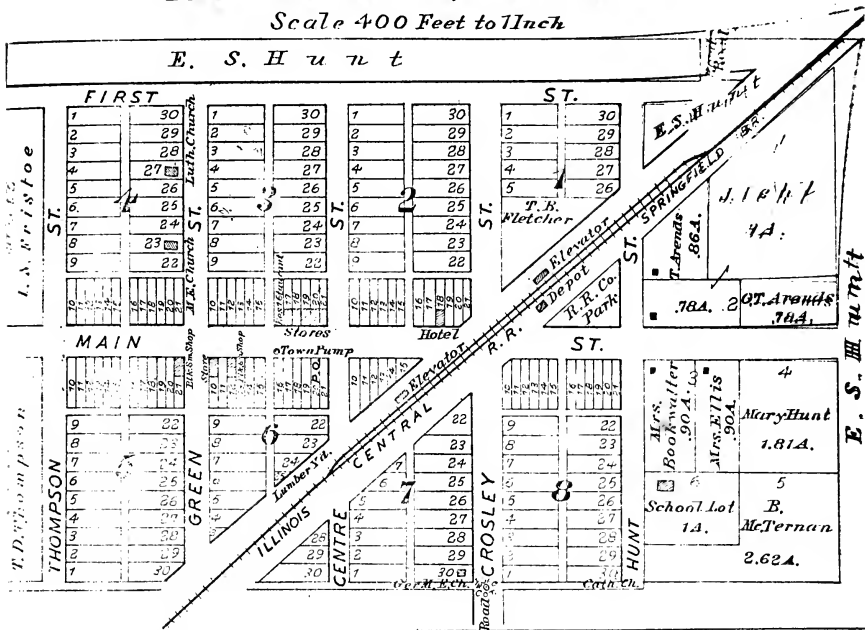


Since Biblical times the well was a gathering place. This was the main pump shown on the early plat map on the opposite page. Plainly distinguishable in the right background is the home of Dr. Perry, where Bruce Kiener now lives. The buildings at the left were replaced by the the Thompson building in 1910. Resting on the wheelbarrow is Michael Karney; his son, Walter has his arm around the dog's neck. Enoch Hunt lounges against the side of the well.

# MELVIN.

Scale 400 Feet to Inch

E. S. Hunt



The Big Four Drainage District, established in August, 1899, provides the Melvin area with most of its drainage. During 1900 and 1901, the district undertook its first big project which was construction of a twenty-four-mile open ditch. This ditch is supplemented by at least twenty sub-districts, most of them open ditches. Hundreds of miles of tile, many of which were laid before 1910, honeycomb the area. Approximately 43,000 acres are in this district which empties into the middle fork of the Vermilion river, southeast of Paxton, then winds to near Danville, and eventually to the Wabash river.

Some of the persons who have been commissioners over the years are John Worthington, Henry Spellmeyer, Harry Strelluf, Philip Benz, Charles Sharp, and O. K. Boshell. Current commissioners are Delmar Lee,

Melvin, and Paul Davis and Richard Schertz, Gibson City.

Records from 1901 show that citizens signed a petition to save the shade trees destroyed while building sidewalks, and sent a request to the village board for hitching racks at the west end of town. Ellis Worthington submitted a bill for scooping snow at twenty-five cents an hour. Mike Bristle, town marshal, received a monthly salary of \$25; street crossing cleaner, fifteen cents an hour; and judges of election, \$2.00.

In 1902, twelve gasoline lights were put up on poles on the street corners, and "the old lamplighter," Paul Hoobler, and later Alfred Graff, lighted them each night. Eventually, the Central Illinois Public Service Company, at the request of the city council, put in electric lights for the town.

During 1903, Henry Spellmeyer and Amandus Buchholz purchased twenty-seven acres of Enoch Hunt's farm, lying just north of Second street. They were called Spellmeyer and Buchholz second additions to Melvin. Lots were sold for \$200, and by 1906, twenty-five new houses had been built.

A new school building at the west end of Main street replaced the old wooden structure in 1904. The Order of Eastern Star chapter was also instituted that year, making eight clubs and lodges for the town.

About 1908, George T. Arends and his son, Andrew, built a concrete block factory across the alley from Andrew's home on Crossley street. Several buildings in Melvin, including Hartmann's garage, Allen's garage, the Remus Curtis home, and the village hall were built of blocks from this factory.

Around the year 1909, a race track was built at the north edge of Melvin on William Hunt's farm, operated by his son, Clyde. Races (sulky and horseback) were held each summer and the amphitheater was always crowded.

Ballgames were popular summer entertainment then, just as they are today. The Fourth of July celebration always featured a balloon ascension.

For many years band concerts were presented each Wednesday evening from a hayrack on Main street. William Madden, son of Professor William Madden, Sr., organized a popular band in 1914. After the Maddens moved, William Beck became the bandmaster. The band played for Fourth of July celebrations,



Back row, l. to r.: Wm. Boundy, Geo. Arends, Les Arends, Wm. Madden, Alf Arends, Forrest Thompson, LeRoy Arends. Middle row: Paul Bose, Walter Beck, Geo. Phillips, R. O. Spellmeyer, Alf. Ehmen, Shelby Powell. Front row: Sebo Ehmen, Ed Beck, Walter Madden, Hans Mielke, Guy Thompson, Wm. Beck.

homecomings at Colfax, Roberts, Thawville, and Sibley, and the Gibson City Corn Carnival. Some of the members joined the Navy during World War I and played in the Great Lakes Navy Band.



The large home of Andrew Arends on Crossley Street is pictured at left. The arrow mark in the alley indicates the location of the block factory, some of which is visible near the alley. The building with the X mark is built of the block manufactured there.



### MELVIN CONCERT BAND OF 1903

Back row: l. to r. - "Prof." Foreman, Gedelman, Pat McQuillan, Herman Johnson, Shelby Powell, Elmer Schafer, D. McCarthy. Middle row: Geo. Beck, Bill Beck, "Bom" Koestner, Floyd Thompson, Clifford Gash, Wiley Powell, Geo. Bertram, "Blacky" Thompson. Front row: Bert Powell, Mike Arends, "Pacer" Phillips, "Bee" Phillips.



### EARLY MELVIN CONCERT BAND

L. to r. - Unknown, William Sorgumfry, Elmer Ashby, Salter, Ben Hull, Knute Holverson, Herman Dienelt, Tom Lynch, owner of the harness store in background, Mont Thompson, George Larkin, Unknown, Mr. Foreman, and Amandus Buchholz.

In 1910, the first airplane that many Melvin residents had ever seen had a race with an Illinois Central passenger train. It was a Wright Brothers' aircraft, piloted by Walter Brookins. The race began at Washington Park, Chicago, and ended at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield, a distance of 187 miles, in five hours and forty-seven minutes at a "record breaking" speed of thirty-five miles an hour. Brookins won the race and the \$10,000 prize offered by the Chicago Record, a William Randolph Hearst newspaper. The plane landed twice for refueling, the first stop at Gilman and the other at Mount Pulaski. Wilbur Wright, whose flying machine made history at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, was a passenger on the train. School was dismissed, so all the pupils could go to the depot or some open space near the tracks to view the race, and were thrilled to wave to Mr. Wright



First airship over Melvin.



The Charles Schueneman's first automobile.

when he appeared on the rear platform of the train.

By 1904, the automobile was receiving some notice. Dr. H. N. Boshell and Charles Schueneman had the first automobiles in town. W. H. Thompson and Son became Ford dealers, selling Ford touring cars at \$295. They built a concrete block garage on east Main street, where the old Melvin Hotel, operated by Mrs. Ruth Hunt Miller, was located. Fred Mielke was the agent for Chevrolet, while Edward Dietterle sold the Durant, Star, and Oakland automobiles. Before World War I, only forty-six automobiles and seven tractors were owned by Melvin area residents.



Wm. H. Thompson's son, Delmar, pictured with his son, Robert, in front of garage now operated by Don Allen.

Some of the other business places on Main street in the early 1900's were as follows: N. T. Graves, liveryman; George T. Harsch, general merchandise; William Stathers, hardware; Thompson Company, implements and harness; Day and Ricketts, meat market; Dr. H. N. Boshell; Roland's restaurant; William Buchholz, grain dealer; Wheeler and Berry, grain dealers; Colteaux and Hunt, real estate; Jacob Gedelman, contractor Dr. E. T. Magarity, dentist; W. B. Phillips, barber; E. K. Ashley, painter; Mahlon Hess, druggist; George Timmons, restaurant; George Arends, restaur-



North side of east Main Street looking west.

ant; Harry Bell, meat market; James Cooper, meat market, and Henry Holverson painter.

About seventy-five Melvin boys were in the armed services in 1916 when the United States joined the other Allied nations in the war which would "make the world safe for democracy." None were killed in battle, but many died in camp of the flu epidemic. Everyone celebrated when news came on November 11, 1918, that an armistice had been signed, and a big parade was held on Main street. Iva Sprouse Arends, dressed as the Goddess of Liberty, led the parade. The Kaiser was hung in effigy on west Main street.

In 1919, the American Legion Post No. 642 was organized. In 1922, a new high school was built at the north end of Melvin. By 1923, Melvin had its one and only "Empire Theatre," owned by George Arends.



In left foreground is pictured the old hotel building.

The Geo. T. Harsch Store





High School Orchestra of 1922: Back row, l. to r. - Eva Tansley Lackey, Margie Iehl Boshell, Millie Arends Harshbarger, John Ren, Les Eminger, "Hap" Ralph Arends, Walter Arends, Vernon Falck, Della Kenward, Floyd Otto. Middle row: Dan Stahmer, Les Johnson, Karl Arends, Grace Kenward, Earl Thackeray, Guilford Ren, Merna Johnson Elliott, Ruth Steinman Piele, Prof. Schwarz, orchestra leader, Jack Jones, principal. Front row: Evelyn Meyers Arends, Cleo Bier, Alberta Shade, Norene Meyers Paddock, Mary Thompson Netherton, Ferne Stephens, Emma Netherton Roth, Ferne Hunt Frederiking, Laura Arends, Ethel Iehl Day, Thelma King Gedelman.

Henry Hackett operated the motion picture machine. Jacob Miller was ticket seller, and Thelma King and Evelyn Meyers played the piano for the silent movies. A favorite movie serial, shown once a week, was "The Perils of Pauline."

One exciting day in 1923, J. A. Schafer's bank was robbed. The culprits were caught in Peoria and sentenced to the Joliet prison.

During the 1920's and 30's, some of the business places and people were as follows:

Charles Hodges, blacksmith  
W. C. Holmes, general merchandise  
Glen Thompson, general merchandise  
Charles Groen, boots and shoes  
William Kayser, leather goods and shoes  
Ann Fyffe, milliner  
Arthur Beck, restaurant  
Dueringer dairy  
Strubhar's dairy  
Vera Wilson, beauty operator  
Glen Roland, contractor  
Abel Kiener, painter  
Lloyd Thompson, barber  
James Thompson, tavern  
Vernon Wurzbarger creamery  
Muehlenpfort creamery

Dan Meyers, restaurant  
Ed Zeschke, Tavern  
Frank Hartman, tavern  
I. F. Harshbarger, junk dealer  
W. H. Thompson and Son, Ford dealers  
August Mielke, garage  
"Skinny" Edmunds, restaurant  
Lyle Thompson, restaurant  
Gus Gimbel, well drilling  
Beck Brothers, I. H. C. dealers  
Julia Kenward, variety store  
Bertha Howk, variety store  
Goebel Johnson, restaurant  
William Boundy, restaurant  
Eustace Steinman, barber  
John Clark, barber  
Arends and Sons, John Deere dealers  
Straight's Shoe Repair  
Melvin State Bank  
Iehl and Sons, bank  
Charles Underwood, trucking  
Milton "Whang" Smith, dray service  
Jim Long, harness shop  
G. F. Howk, The Melvin Motor, printing office  
Farmers' Elevator  
Woodward's Dray Service





In 1912 Robert Swanick, left, operated this restaurant in the building east of the Ford County Press. The young lad in the center is Glen Thompson, James Thompson is shown on the right.

Melvin was in the depths of the Great Depression in 1933, although the agricultural depression had already made itself felt for several years. Franklin D. Roosevelt was president and the first hundred days of his administration made headlines everywhere. The first step he took which affected Melvin was closing the nation's banks in March, 1933. For the first time in nearly fifty years, the town had no banking facilities.



Shown above is the "hard road lateral" old Rt. 48, now Rt. 54, laid in 1930.



Shave and a haircut - - - - six bits.

Many new organizations were formed during these years, including the Melvin Woman's Club, Junior Woman's Club, American Legion Auxiliary, 4-H clubs, the Home Bureau (now the Home Extension) Ancient Order of Gleaners, Melvin Library, and the Melvin Garden Club.

In 1933, the first fire hose truck was purchased for the Melvin Fire Department. Charles Hodge was fire chief and Roy Fickwiler and Harry Kessler were assistants. In 1940, a chemical fire truck was purchased.

By 1933 most of the old wooden buildings on Main street had been razed, and new brick structures had been built.

Nearly everyone in Melvin visited the Century of Progress exposition in Chicago during the summers of 1933 and 1934. The year 1934 was important to Melvin for another reason, for Leslie C. Arends was elected to represent the 17th district in the United States Congress.

The town was really feeling the impact of the second World War by 1943. One hundred and thirty boys and girls were in the armed forces, and those who were left were in war work of various kinds. Farmers were turning out huge quantities of food stuffs without adequate help, with pre-war machinery. If equipment broke down, it was repaired somehow.

Many persons worked in defense plants, on the ration board, the draft board, or with the Red Cross. There were bandages to be made in the Red Cross rooms, with Mrs. Robert Fitchie in charge, blood to be donated which meant trips to Chicago and Kankakee to the blood banks, and many other types of war work. Rationing was the order of the day. War bond drives were always successful, and Melvin usually exceeded its quota. Everyone was drawn closer together in a spirit of sacrifice. The old cannon that stood in the Melvin cemetery so many years was given to the scrap iron drive.



Pictured here is Amandus Buchholz in his General Merchandise Store

Adelaide Dixon, fifth and sixth grade teacher, organized a Junior Red Cross. This group conducted paper drives and collected aluminum and scrap iron. They made lap robes and elbow pillows for military hospitals.

The war ended, the servicemen returned, and for the first time Melvin suffered from a housing shortage. New houses sprang up and business houses were remodeled or enlarged.

On Veterans' Day, November 11, 1947, a war memorial monument was dedicated which was inscribed with the names of one hundred and thirty veterans from Melvin and vicinity. The monument was purchased with proceeds from the raffle of an afghan, donated by Mrs. Jane McConnell, a Hunt descendant. The names of seven boys who had paid the supreme sacrifice were marked with gold stars: John Arends, Dale Bentz, William Brokate, James Cooper, John Frank, Ronald Gimbel, and John Huston. The monument stands at the corner of Main and Crossley streets, where Veterans'

Day services are conducted each year by local organizations.

In 1946, the Veterans of Foreign Wars was organized, and in 1949 its auxiliary was formed. Also, in 1946, residents found a new pastime at the Melvin Roller Rink, owned by S. E. Shives. During the several years that it was in operation, Mike Arends and S. E. Shives both suffered broken arms, but neither managed to learn the art of skating. Then the crowd found other forms of entertainment, and the building was used as a poultry house for several years. It is now used by the Melvin-Sibley schools for housing the school busses.

The general prosperity of the community is reflected in the fact that there are only a few vacant business places, and the population remains stable at 550. In 1959, Francis Swearingen platted an addition on Third street, called the Swearingen addition, where five new houses have been built. (The Swearingen home is not included in this addition.)



The Oelrich's farmstead two and one-half miles north of Melvin. Mr. and Mrs. Siebelt Oelrich at left; their sons Hays on horseback and Sebo on right.



Shown here are, from left to right, Joe Boundy, his wife, Denia Arends Boundy, Hannah Arends Otto, and George Arends. In front, with their prized toys, are Tammy Boundy, left, and William Boundy.

Great changes occurred on the farms when electricity became available through the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in the late 1930's. Many back-breaking jobs vanished forever, as electric power replaced muscle power.

The rural area changed drastically in other ways during the last decade or two. Farms have become

larger. Many old farmhouses and outbuildings have disappeared along with the Osage Orange hedgerows which served the pioneers as fences and boundary lines. At the turn of the century a typical farm was approximately 160 acres, although many small families got along quite nicely on 80 acres. Now, farms of 500 to 1,000 acres are common; the average size Ford County farm during 1970 was 340 acres.



Class of 1934 - Were you there?

In 1949 a major change in the school system was effected. The Melvin and Sibley schools were merged into one district. Each town had its own grade school, grades 1 through 6; 7th and 8th graders attended junior high in Sibley; and high school classes were held in Melvin. Ralph Moore was the first unit superintendent; Bill Coddington was high school principal; Ed Freehill left the Melvin grade school to become principal of the Sibley grade school and the Melvin-Sibley junior high; and Maude Whiteman was named principal of the Melvin grade school.

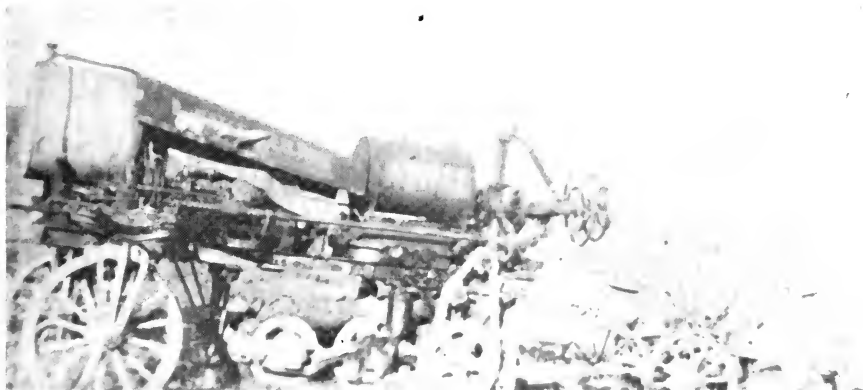
In 1961 a new Melvin grade school was built adjoining the high school and the old grade school, first occupied in 1905, was demolished. In September of this year another change will be made; Grades K through 5 of both Melvin and Sibley will have their classes in Sibley and grades 6 through 8 will meet in the present Melvin grade school.

The cooperation among Melvin residents and their feeling of responsibility for their neighbors have given the Melvin Volunteer Fire Department an enviable reputation. Probably the two largest fires in Melvin's history were in 1949 when the Melvin State

Bank was gutted by fire and in 1970 when the large grain elevator owned by the Ford Grain Company was destroyed.

In 1951 the Melvin Fair Association purchased seventeen acres of land at the east end of Melvin and the fair that year was held at the new location. Since its beginning, in 1926, the fair had been held in the space north of the high school. As new attractions were added and space for more exhibits was needed, the original area was outgrown. In 1955, seven acres more were added to the fairgrounds and the first permanent building was constructed for the household exhibits. With the addition of other buildings, a grandstand seating 3,000 persons, and a small lake, the grounds are now appraised at \$100,000.





Shown above is a "Bates Steel Mule," a three bottom tractor owned by Andrew Beacher in 1917. The tractor has a 4 cylinder gas engine and a one track crawler in back. Of the three wheels shown, one is to steer, one to shift gears and the other to disengage the clutch.

As is our country's other wars, Melvin was courageously and honorably represented in the Korean and Viet Nam wars. One Melvin boy lost his life in each war: Harold Rowcliff in Korea, and Donnie Dale in Viet Nam.

Six Melvin girls brought a considerable measure of fame to their home town in 1953 and 1954. Patty Freehill, Eleanor Dueringer, Nada Rowand, Nancy Thackeray, Annette Thackeray, and Beverly Moore, all members of the 4-H club, formed a sextet with the assistance of Lois Weber as accompanist and Patricia Gasthoff, music director for the schools. They called themselves the "Cloverettes" and made many appearances in this part of the state. In every 4-H club competition, they won first place, including the state finals. In December, 1953, they represented Illinois at the National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago. The people of Melvin and friends from this part of the country sent hundreds of postal cards to a Chicago TV station where the girls appeared on the Morris B. Saks Amateur Hour. Each card was counted as a vote and the Cloverettes won that competition in 1954. Polly and Bud Lippincott and Polly and Arnold Rowand did a lot of chauffeuring in 1953 and 1954 and heard a lot of singing.

"Les Arends Day" on May 27, 1960, was a big event for Melvin, marking the congressman's twenty-fifth

year as representative from the 17th District.

Congressman and Mrs. Arends and Vice-President and Mrs. Richard Nixon flew to Chanute Field, where they were greeted by other dignitaries, and proceeded to Melvin in a motorcade. The town was decorated with flags and banners and placards reading, "Welcome Les." The first stop was at the Melvin-Sibley High School where Vice President Nixon gave a short talk to over a thousand people. Then the crowd moved to the Arends' residence, at the corner of Second and Crossley streets, where a press conference had been set up in the back yard.

Fred Drake was chairman of the event, which drew 5,400 people to the Melvin fairgrounds that evening for a fish fry supper, served by the Ford County Council of the American Legion and the Auxiliaries.

A reception line, including the Arends, Nixons, Governor Stratton, and other distinguished guests, formed in the dance hall. At 7:30 P. M. a program was held in front of the grandstand. Mrs. C. Wayland Brooks, national Republican Committeewoman of Illinois, was introduced, and Governor William Stratton spoke briefly. Millard Dixon, commander of Melvin Post No. 642 of the American Legion, presented Congressman Arends with a life membership card to that organization.

A congratulatory telegram from President Eisenhower was read by Bruce Harlow, deputy presidential assistant. Vice-President Nixon gave the



Pictured above are Vice-President and Mrs. Richard Nixon with Gov. Stratton of Illinois at Les Arends' home in Melvui during Les Arends Day Celebration

address of the evening. Following the program, a dance was held in the pavilion, with music by the Ralph Martini band.

The population of Melvin might be divided into three groups: the elderly, retired persons, many of them widows or widowers; the "commuters," who may be employed in Champaign, Bloomington, or even farther away; and the local business and professional people, who make their living by serving the needs of the community.

The post-war "baby boom" was reflected in a peak enrollment in the Melvin-Sibley schools of 528 during 1963-64. A tapering-off process began around 1968-69, which is expected to continue through the mid-seventies, if current projections are correct. Beginning with the 1970 fall term, the district had 454 students. This had dropped to 434 by the end of the school year.

As Melvin begins its second century, there is a general air of quiet confidence which is heartening. As long as its citizens have this faith in the future and are willing to work to make their dreams become realities, Melvin will have a bright future.

Melvin is in the "Heartland of America." It has all the nostalgic flavor of an Illinois town—deep-shaded streets, unfenced yards, friendly people. There are still mighty footsteps in the prairie grasses as they bow before the wind, footsteps of a brave and simple past, leading to a confident tomorrow.



After a big snow storm, 1912.



Thompson building.



Water tower, erected in 1912.



# Melvin Chapter No. 537 Order of Eastern Star

Melvin Chapter No. 537 of the Order of the Eastern Star was instituted on December 5, 1904, in the Melvin Masonic Hall, with Onarga Chapter No. 429 conducting the work. Lizzie Sharp and Dr. H. N. Boshell were installed as worthy matron and worthy patron. Other officers installed that night were Georgia Wheeler, Dora Buchholz, Ida Phillips, Mabel Harsch, Mary Sharp,



Dr. H. N. Boshell

Sarah McMahon, Anna Boshell, Elizabeth Perry, Clara Gedelman, W. B. Phillips, and William Wheeler.

The chapter adopted its by-laws on December 16, 1904, and installation took place on January 6, 1906. A note from the minutes of this meeting reads "The hearts of the members were rejoiced by the promise that the worthy matron would not always have to use a doorknob for a gavel, the worthy patron becoming voluntarily responsible for a brand new emblem of

authority." At a later meeting Dr. and Mrs. H. N. Boshell presented the chapter with a gavel of California orange wood, and Mr. and Mrs. George



Glyde Boshell Dietterle and George Phillips.

Harsch gave a frame for the charter.

The first Grand Chapter appointment for Melvin was Leila Iehl, who was Grand Representative of Washington for three years. In 1924, Leila became a Grand Lecturer, and for some time was instructress for the Melvin Chapter.

The chapter celebrated its twenty-fifth year on December 4, 1929, and charter members received bronze emblems at the thirtieth anniversary, on December 5, 1934.

Fifty-year pins and certificates have been awarded to eight members; Julia Kenward, the late Eva Phillips, Bertha Howk, Glyde Dietterle, Eva Spellmeyer, Bertha Arends, Iva Arends, and Nellie Yackee. During 1971, three more members will receive the honor: Ena Thompson, Louella Wright, and Ethel Willy.

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Gifts of furnishings and other appointments from members and from the Masonic Lodge have added beauty to the chapter room. New red carpeting was installed in 1970, which was the result of a project begun in 1962. The Masons also lent their assistance to this undertaking.

Darlene Blair qualified for Grand Lecturer in 1958, and has been instructress for the chapter since 1959. In 1961, she was appointed Grand Representative of Manitoba for three years, and in 1965 she was installed as Grand Esther of Illinois.

Melvin helped institute a new chapter at Sibley in 1945. Twenty-one years later the Sibley group merged with Melvin, and some people who had originally belonged to the Melvin chapter were welcomed back.

Members have contributed regularly to the Macon Home For the Aged, at Macon, Illinois. This institution, together with the one at Rockford, is maintained by

Eastern Star members. The chapter also makes annual contributions to the cancer and heart funds, and to a scholarship fund for young people who are interested in becoming nurses, doctors, teachers or ministers.

The present worthy matron is Bonnie Lange, and the worthy patron is Edward Blair. Other officers include Donna Dueringer, associate matron; Larry Dueringer, associate patron; Ruth Reitz, secretary; and Bertha Howk, treasurer.

## Rebekah Lodge

Melvin Rebekah Lodge, No. 337, was instituted May 2, 1894. The first officers were Maggie Gould, Noble Grand; Mary Shreves, Vice Grand; Hannah Holmes, recording secretary, and May Thompson, treasurer. The lodge closed September 27, 1948. The last officers were: Gladys Bristle, Noble Grand; Sarah Starks, Vice Grand; Nettie Carter, secretary, and Philip Benz, treasurer.



Rear view of Kaufman's home and back yard on north Center Street

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German Lutheran Church.

## St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized on October 20, 1872, as the "German Evangelical Church." It consisted of fifteen families and the pastor, the Rev. Simon Suess. These members erected a building in the spring of 1873 which housed both the sanctuary and the parsonage, and was located at the site of the present parsonage, on Green street. It was valued at \$1,100.

Growth of the congregation required a new and larger building by 1888. This second building, with several additions and modifications, served the congregation for seventy-nine years.

Toward the end of the 1800's St. Peter's began its association with the Lutheran congregations in Germanville and Roberts. The Germanville Lutherans later affiliated with those in Chatsworth, but cooperation with those in Roberts has continued to the present day.

In 1913, the use of the English language was begun. As the years passed the German language was used less

frequently, eventually being replaced altogether by English.

The present parsonage was erected about 1915. Three years later the church received its first electrical wiring, and the parsonage was wired in 1921. About this time, the congregation provided the pastor, Rev. Wilhelm Schumacher, with a Model "T" with which to make his rounds.

The third building, at the north end of Center street, was dedicated on September 10, 1967, just prior to the congregation's celebration of its ninety-fifth anniversary.

Eighteen pastors have served the church. Rev. Harold Heinzig is the present pastor. Organizations within the church include the Luther League, Brotherhood, and the American Lutheran Church Women, or A.L.C.W.



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Spellmeyer walking home from church.

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# Zion Methodist Church



Zion German Methodist Episcopal Church,  
Melvin, Illinois around 1912.

From earliest times, German Methodist preachers pressed westward, one finally reaching the vicinity of Buckley, Illinois. He began preaching missions in Roberts, Ash Grove, and Melvin. There was a promising congregation in Roberts, but when twelve families moved to other states, the work was discontinued.

In 1868, the Melvin church was organized under the leadership of Rev. William Myers. There were ten charter members: Rev. and Mrs. Henry Dueringer, Mr. and Mrs. Teis Arends, Mr. and Mrs. Gerhardt DeFries, Mr. and Mrs. George O. Arends, and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hellman. Meetings were first held in homes and later in schoolhouses.

The first building was owned by Mr. Sullivan. Shortly afterward, the Bell schoolhouse was built, and services were held there for several years.

In 1875, the Melvin and Roberts churches united and bought a country schoolhouse which they moved to Melvin, where St. George Catholic Church now stands. (This was the first Melvin schoolhouse, built in 1870.) This building was used until 1881, when it was sold to the Catholics. The Zion Methodists built a new frame church where the present brick structure now stands. Rev. C. Allert was the pastor.

Along with Sunday School activities, a Junior League was organized. The Epworth League was

organized in 1892 with twenty-three members and Rev. August Karnopp, leader.

The Ladies Aid, now the Women's Society of Christian Service, was organized in 1895, with twenty-five charter members. The Woman's Home Missionary Society began functioning in 1912, with Mrs. F. A. Bosc as the first president.

The brick church was completed and dedicated in 1912, during the pastorate of Rev. Ferd A. Bosc. The beautiful stained glass windows in this building were given by the children of charter members in honor of their parents.

Services at Zion Methodist Church were discontinued in March, 1969, and the two Methodist churches of Melvin were merged on June 1, 1969, under the pastorate of Rev. Harry K. Deffley.

## Glieder und Probeglieder der Gemeinde.

Arends, G. J.	Voelcker, Selma	Zehl, Georg
Arends, Tania	Vall, Ange	Zehl, Edwin
Arends, Tomma	Vall, Minnie	Zehl, Walter
Arends, Lino	Vaundt, Tina	Amoll, Friedrich
Arends, Heinrich	Vertram, Wm.	Meiser, Wm.
Arends, Elisabetha	Vertram, Elisabeth	Meiser, Lydia
Arends, Amelia	Vertram, Ed.	Kempf, Edward
Arends, Theo.	Vertram, Frieda.	Kempf, Louise
Arends, Reinhard	Vertram, Wm. C.	Merle, Heinrich
Arends, Andreas	Vertram, Leah E.	Merle, Tina
Arends, Thea	Vertram, Johanna	Lilo, Hanna
Arends, George	Vertram, Johann	Steinmann, Rev. Dr.
Arends, Samah	Vertram, Dina	Steinmann, Louise
Arends, Albert	Vertram, Geo.	Steinmann, Rev. Dr.
Arends, Maria	Voie, Elisabeth	Steinmann, Lea
Arends, Arthur	Voie, Donna	Zachaefer, Adam
Arends, Alfred	Voie, Paul	Zachaefer, Caroline
Arends, George	Quidmann, Mrs. Wm.	Zachaefer, Elmer
Arends, Clara	DeFries, Mike	Zachaefer, Stella
Arends, Ida	Dueringer, Gilbert	Zeifert, Wilhelmina
Arends, Fred	Dueringer, Edna	Zeifert, Aug.
Arends, Dina	Drabheim, Gust.	Zoben, Cif
Arends, Le Roy	Jones, Anna	Zoben, Marie
Arends, Leslie	Kidweiler, Gust	Zoben, John
Arends, Chas.	Kidweiler, Annie	Zoben, Heinrich
Arends, Anna M.	Olsen, Carl	Zobeleman, Aug.
Arends, Amelia M.	Olsen, Emma	Wagner, Heinrich
Allert, Rev. W.	Sellmann, Maria	Wagner, Emma
Allert, Bertha	Scenicids, John	Zieme, Henry
Allert, Gustave	Scenicids, Meta	
Voelcker, Amelia	Zehl, Maria	

Members of the congregation in 1912 at the  
time of the dedication of the  
Zion Methodist Church.



## St. George Catholic Church

St. George Catholic Church was originally part of the Peoria diocese. In 1880 it was an outmission of St. Joseph's church in Loda under the pastorate of Father Martin F. Kelly and later his successor, Father Louis Heiderman.

In those early years Catholics of the area had no church building, and Mass was offered in the Barney McTernan home. The arrival of the priest from Loda, usually only once a month, was dependent upon the weather and the condition of the few roads of that time.

In 1881 the parish of St. George purchased the church formerly used by the Zion Methodist congregation. This building, constructed in 1870 as the first

Melvin school, had been moved into town in 1875 from its original location on the Charles Phillips farm. It was relocated at the present site of the Catholic church.

Then the Melvin church was made an outmission of Immaculate Conception Church of Gilman in 1885. Barney McTernan (a cousin of the late John Goggins) was railroad section boss from 1885 to 1889. When weather permitted, he would take the rail handcar to Gilman on Sundays to bring the priest to Melvin.

The present frame structure was built in 1889 when Father John P. Quinn was pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Gilman. Melvin remained an outmission of Gilman for two years thereafter.

In 1891 Father John P. Barry was named first resident pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Gibson City and Melvin was attached to this parish. Father Barry's parish consisted of 135 families scattered over a territory of 900 square miles, encompassing 22 villages.

As the Catholic population increased so did the supply of pastors. Masses were said on regular schedules and catechism classes on Saturday mornings became a part of the lives of the children in the St. George parish. Father Gleason, who was pastor at the turn of the century, is remembered by former parishioners as a stern disciplinarian who reproved the children for saying their morning prayers in bed.

Parishes grew, and the pastors needed assistance with the religious education classes. Gradually parishioners relieved them of these teaching duties. At present, classes of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine are conducted at the parish hall in Gibson City on Saturdays for grade school students and on Sundays for high school students.

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During the pastorate of Father McMullen, on June 14, 1925, the late Father Alphonse Freehill, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Freehill of rural Melvin, offered his First Mass at the home of his parents. As St. George's church was too small to accommodate the two thousand people who attended, the state legislature furnished two large tents and set them up in the yard for the occasion. Father Al, a member of the Benedictine Order, is the only young man from St. George parish to enter the priesthood.

Two girls from the parish entered religious Orders. Emma Matt, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Matt, became a nun in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was then known as Sister Mary Maurina. Linda Hatton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ford Hatton, is now with the Order of the Holy Heart of Mary at Batavia, Illinois, and will be professed a nun in the near future.

The Altar and Rosary Society, composed of all the women of the parish, had no formal organization until 1942. Under Father Motsett's direction, it became an active group. Mrs. John Goggins was the first president, and Mrs. Edward Freehill, the first secretary-treasurer. It is now known as the Council of Catholic Women, and is affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Women and the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations. Present officers include Mrs. Michael Freehill, president; Mrs. Barre Henry, vice-president; Mrs. Michael Kinsella, secretary; and Mrs. Charles Freehill, treasurer.

Two members of St. George parish are currently serving as officers of the Ford-Iroquois Deanery, Council of Catholic Women: Mrs. Michael Kinsella, president, and Mrs. Claude Freehill, secretary.



In 1949, while Father O'Neill was pastor of St. George, the Joliet diocese was formed, and Ford and Iroquois counties became part of the new diocese.

Pastors who have administered the parish since formation of the Joliet diocese include Fathers Edmund O'Neill, Joseph Jurkovich, William Kirk, James Duffy, and Vytas Memenas, the present pastor.



The Michael A. Freehill family  
in their 1916 Hudson.

Location of Catholic Church on  
South Hunt Street around 1889.



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## The Melvin Congregational Church - 1888.



## Congregational Christian Church

A small, enthusiastic group of early settlers founded the First Congregational Church of Melvin in 1888. Old records have been lost and all of their names are not known, but among them were Mrs. E. S. Hunt and her daughter, Mrs. Bookwalter, and the A. P. Gould, L. S. Heath, and F. W. Porter families. They were soon joined by others, including the Holmes, Shilts, Gedelman and Wilson families, familiar names in Melvin to the present time.

Church services were held in the rooms above Gould's store for about two years during which time the present church building was erected. The first pastor, Rev. Kettle, was also pastor of the Congregational church in Roberts at that time. This church was received into the Central East Association at its meeting in Roberts on September 27, 1887, and the first delegates, Mr. Gould and Mrs. Porter, were given seats in the session.

The first resident pastor was Rev. J. Wood Miller in 1895. In 1897 the tenth anniversary was celebrated

with many old members present. The parsonage was built during that year and the next, most of the work being done by members of the church. Rev. W. R. Dixon was pastor, and he and his bride were the first occupants. On October 12, 1937, the church commemorated its fiftieth year with special evening services.

The Sunday School was active from the first days of the church's history until the latter part of November, 1952, when it was dissolved. The Ladies' Aid and the Missionary Society were originally separate organizations but united eventually under the name of Women's Fellowship Society. Another organization, the Christian Endeavor, was later followed by Pilgrim Fellowship.

Six ministers were ordained during the years the church was in existence: Rev. William Humphrey, Rev. W. E. Dixon, Rev. Ada Heyse, Rev. E. S. Guilbert, Rev. Glenn Utterback, and Rev. William Hobbs. Rev. E. S. Guilbert's pastorate, from 1929 to 1938, was the longest of the twenty-one ministers who served this church.

In 1944, when Rev. Robert Karn was pastor, the church was yoked with the Roberts church. This association continued until September 10, 1961, when the Melvin church was disbanded.



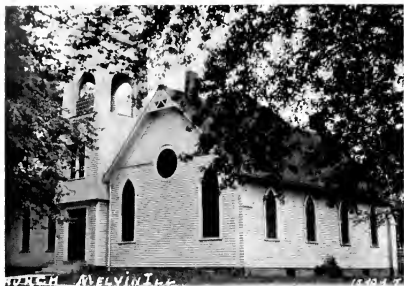
Picture of Joseph Shilts taken in 1908.



Melvin Congregational Church Choir around 1900. Back Row:  
Edith (Gedelman) Millhorn, Fred Carrol, Albert Gedelman.  
Front row: Mabel Gould, Bertha (Gould) Mayhew,  
Maude (Holmes) Yolton, and Rev. Dixon.



This is the Congregational Church "Harvest Home Festival" of about 1903.



The old First Methodist Church taken in 1908.

the schoolhouse, a hall, the depot, and finally, in a small church owned by the German Methodist congregation. The first quarterly conference was held in the depot on November 26, 1871.

Rev. T. P. Henry was appointed the first pastor in a circuit of three appointments: Roberts, Melvin, and the Bell schoolhouse. Melvin paid \$75 to the preacher the first year. Services were held in the Phillips school, Gould's Hall, and the German Methodist church.

By the fall of 1878, membership had grown to the point where a real church home seemed feasible. The new church was built during 1879, and dedicated in June of the following year. It was an unusual building for a village church of that time because it had a furnace, two regular classrooms, and a balcony which was used for a classroom. In those days the church was a social center, and most people, whether members or not, were interested in church projects. Thus, the "Melvin Chapel" became known throughout the surrounding area.

In 1894 the appointment was changed from a circuit to a station by the separation of Roberts and Melvin. This was just a temporary measure, however, for through the years the Melvin Methodist church has been connected with Roberts, Sibley and the Zion Methodist churches.

## Melvin United Methodist Church

In 1869, before Melvin had become a village, a pioneer settler called Father Pierce, who lived at Oliver's Grove (eight miles northwest of Melvin), came into Peach Orchard township and established a regular preaching base at the Grand Prairie school. This site, two miles north of Melvin, together with several other preaching locations in neighboring townships, became known as "Pierce's Mission."

Grand Prairie was added to the Piper City Mission, and Brother William R. Irvine was appointed to the charge. However, he had to relinquish this appointment a few months later, and Father Pierce resumed his work until the fall of 1871.

The Gilman, Clinton, and Springfield railroad was laid in 1870, and soon afterward the village of Melvin came into being. The Grand Prairie appointment was moved to Melvin and its name was changed to Methodist Episcopal Church. The first class consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Phillips, William Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. T. D. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Stephens, and Jane Ogden.

Meetings were held in various places in the village:



Shown in the left background is the old German Methodist Church in use until the brick structure was built in 1911.

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Seated, left to right - T. D. Thompson, John Thompson, William Thompson, and back, left, Nancy Thompson Grove, right, Sarah Thompson Day.

A new and larger sanctuary was added to the south side of the church building in 1895, and the old part was used as an Epworth League room, with changes being made to accommodate Sunday School classes. Further enlargement came about in 1921, when an excavation under the large sanctuary provided space for a kitchen and dining room.

In 1929, with dreams of a new and modern church some day becoming a reality, the congregation purchased two corner lots at the intersection of First and north Center streets. A campaign for funds had scarcely begun when the Great Depression hit. Funds were returned to the donors; the old building was repaired and decorated, and it continued to serve the congregation for twenty more years.

In 1944 and 1945, during the pastorate of Rev. Milton Heitzman, members selected a building committee to begin making plans for a new church. An additional lot, which adjoined the two corner lots, was donated

by members, and in May, 1949, the actual construction began.

During the following years, many people performed untold hours of volunteer labor and conducted numerous financial campaigns to help finance the project. The new church was formally opened for its first full service on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1950, with Rev. Harold Peterson, the pastor, conducting the ceremony.

By 1954, major construction was completed and the church was consecrated on October 31. A service of dedication and inspiration was conducted October 20, 1957, to mark payment of the final debt.

The Central Illinois Conference and the Chicago Conference were united in 1947, and Rev. Harold Peterson, who had come to Melvin in 1946, was the first pastor to serve both Methodist churches. Other pastors who subsequently served under this arrangement were: Rev. Oscar Chindberg, Rev. Fred Drake, Rev. Arthur Webb, Rev. Richard Brinkman, Rev. Dale Kooi, and Rev. Harry Deffley, the present pastor.

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CITY OF PAXTON, L. John Lee, Mayor  
Paxton

In April, 1968, at a meeting of the General Conference and the former Evangelical United Brethren Conference, the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches officially merged under the new name, the "United Methodist Church."

The merger of the two Melvin churches occurred on March 23, 1969, and joint services were held for the first time on June 1, 1969. Through the merger, the United Methodist Church now has 338 members.



Charlie Milligan and J. D. Taylor (depot agent) standing in front of Melvin depot. Church meetings and the first quarterly conference of M. E. Church were held here.



Our first post office was located on the south side of Main St., directly across from what we now call the Farm Bureau Building.

The following is a list of postmasters since the establishment of the post office on February 12, 1872.

Postmasters:	Date of Appointments:	Postmasters:	Date of Appointments:
Earnest Leyres	February 12, 1872	May B. Ellis	January 17, 1922
Thomas D. Thompson	November 7, 1872	Edwin Beck	December 11, 1926
D. J. Freese	August 4, 1885	May B. Ellis	October 23, 1928
Bart Holmes	August 12, 1885	Marietta Boshell	December 15, 1932
Thomas D. Thompson	April 13 1889	Clyde E. Wilson	April 11, 1933
Bart Holmes	June 19, 1893	Myrtle L. Hasenauer	March 31, 1967
James S. Thompson	June 21, 1897	Virginia A. DeFries	April 30, 1967
W. J. McKenna	June 6, 1913	Myrtle L. Hasenauer	January 12, 1968

## Melvin 4-H Clubs



Birthday Party - 1901.

The Melvin Girls' 4-H Club was organized in 1935 through the efforts of Hugh D. Triplett, Ford County Farm Adviser. Viola Muehlenport was the first leader, succeeded in 1936 by Mrs. O. E. Lippincott. Mrs. Lippincott served in this capacity for thirty-five years, retiring in 1970. Leaders of the present club are Mrs. Harold Copass and Miss Renda Hughes.

Denmark as a member of the Teen Caravan, sponsored by the 4-H Foundation. °

4-H is under the auspices of the Cooperative Extension Service. The present Ford County Youth Adviser is Ray Richardson.

The agricultural club, or Melvin Boys' 4-H, was organized in 1928 with C. W. Haworth as the first leader. George Swain was the county Farm Adviser at that time.

During World War II, Melvin had a third 4-H club, called the Victory Garden Club. Mrs. Francis Swearingen led this group.

The leader with the longest service record in the agriculture club was Hartzell Teesdale. During those years the club reached its largest enrollment of forty-one boys and girls.

In order to be achievement members, boys and girls must show their projects at the county fair, and they may advance to the state fair. Other programs available to 4-H members include the Leadership Training Camp at Monticello, Key Club, National Club Congress, and the International Farm Youth Exchange. During the summer of 1970, Margo Donovan visited



Viola, Earl, and Ralph Thackeray.



Woman's Relief Corps Quilting Party - 1901.

## Agricultural Co-op Extension

The Ford County Extension Service was organized in 1919 to provide farmers with production management information. At that time the farm bureau was organized to give local support to extension programs.

The Melvin unit of Agricultural Extension Services was organized in 1928 with Mr. George Swain as the first farm advisor. This was the only extension service until 1935 when the Home Economics Extension Service was organized. Acting together, these two groups have provided leadership for the 4H Clubs. The 4H program is now an integral part of Co-operative Extension Services. Local financial support is provided by the Ford County Board of Supervisors.

Following George Swain as farm advisor in 1928 were: W. F. Purnell, 1929-35; Hugh Triplett, 1935-46; Arnold Rowand, 1946-67; and James Neuschwander since 1967.



Isaac Bond prepares his 1920 model tractor.



Charter Members WRC, 1890.

The Melvin unit of the Woman's Relief Corps was organized June 14, 1890. Twenty-seven women were charter members. They helped the G. A. R. in sponsoring Memorial Day services, decorated soldiers'

graves, and erected a wooden monument in Melvin Cemetery dedicated to Unknown Dead. When they disbanded in 1925, they planted a maple tree at the north end of the cemetery.

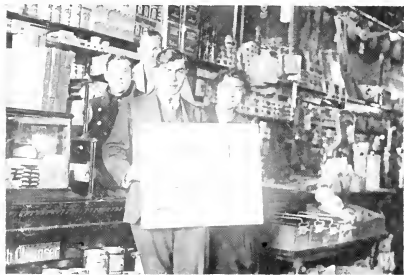


Looking East on Main street.

## Melvin Township Library

The present Melvin Public Library grew from a project of the Melvin Junior Woman's Club, which was organized in 1934. Club members donated their own books and started a lending library from a small book rack in Kaufman's General Store that year. After Ben Kaufman died in 1935, W. C. Holmes offered shelf space in his general store, and the books were moved there. Volunteers from the Woman's Club and the Junior Woman's Club acted as librarians two days each week.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1939 made it possible for Melvin to have a real library. The state supplied a collection of books, furnished a lending service from the Illinois State Library, and paid the salary of the librarian, Miss Gertrude Lamoreaux. The village board made the town hall available for space, and paid the heating costs.



First Library - W. C. Holmes store shelves.  
Front, W. C. Holmes and his sister  
Dorothy Holmes Thompson.  
Back, Ed Beck and Alex Krushke.

In 1942, with the shut-down of WPA Funds, patrons were faced with the choice of closing the library or having a successful referendum for tax support. Voters approved a one-mill tax for a township library, and the state left the books on a "permanent loan" basis. The wall separating the library from the old jail was removed and the added room was used for children's books. The first trustees elected were as follows: Mrs. Edward Freehill, president, Mrs. Edward Dietterle, secretary-treasurer; Walter C. Iehl, Mrs. Henry Ficken, Mrs. Leroy Arends and Miss Adelaide Dixon.

For many years the Melvin Woman's Club gave annual financial support to the library for the purpose of purchasing books and magazines. All of the Melvin churches, many organizations, and individuals contributed books, furniture and equipment. The family of James Long, who has served as president of the village board, gave the librarian's desk in his memory.

The VFW Auxiliary donated the tables and chairs for the children's room and gives money each year toward the purchase of children's books. The American Legion Auxiliary contributes memorial books for its



l to r: Phil Arends, LeRoy Arends,  
Rick Arends.

This page sponsored through the courtesy of

## AREND'S BROTHERS

JOHN DEERE SALES and SERVICE, Melvin

former presidents. Books on gardening have been given by the Melvin Garden Club, and several memorial books have been contributed by the Boy Scouts.

In 1967 the Melvin Public Library joined the new Lincoln Trails Library System of Champaign. Books, phonograph records, pictures, tapes, films and educational material may be borrowed through this organization. A story-hour for children is held every summer. Last year the Library sponsored a summer art course which will be repeated this year.

The book collection in 1939 numbered about 400, and the yearly circulation was around 1,200. Now there are approximately 8,000 books and magazines, and the 1970 circulation was 7,558. In 1970 there were 800 resident and 150 non-resident borrowers, who paid one dollar annually per family for the use of the township library.

The library building was remodeled in 1965. New glass brick windows, a restroom, and air-conditioning were installed, and the rooms were completely redecorated.

Librarians succeeding Miss Lamoreaux have been as follows: Mrs. Hartzell Teesdale, Mrs. Clyde Wilson, Mrs. Elmer Underwood, Mrs. Howard Arnold, and Mrs. Pearl Schultz. Mrs. Schultz, librarian since 1959, has held the position longer than any other.

Present trustees include the following persons: Mrs. Francis Swearingen, president; Mrs. Leroy Arends, vice president; Miss Adelaide Dixon, secretary; Melvin Beacher, treasurer; Mrs. Albert Reitz, Mrs. Dale Moody, and Miss Marcella Long.



This "Auto Hospital" was located across from the present site of the Ford County Press Office.

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**THACKERAY INSURANCE and REAL ESTATE AGENCY**

**Melvin**



When the Daylight Special derailed and wrecked just north of Melvin in January of 1913, it provided excitement and a topic for conversation for months. The steel construction of the cars prevented the tragic loss of life suffered in the Chatsworth wreck years before.



# Melvin Schools

In the spring of 1870, at an election in which five votes were cast, August Buchholz, Charles Phillips, and William Lackey were elected to the first Melvin school board. Construction of the schoolhouse was begun that fall, at the northeast corner of section 2, on land owned by Charles Phillips (presently Mahlon Dixon's pasture). In April, 1871, the first term began with Miss Hettie Mathis, teacher, for "six male and eight female" students.

In 1875 a new school which faced north was built on Hunt street at the site of the present residence of Mrs. William Holmes. Miss Clara Huston was the first teacher. By 1883 more room was needed, and a new, two-story building, 30 feet by 50 feet, was constructed adjoining the old school.

Until this time only one teacher taught all subjects in all grades. With the enlarged school, however, two teachers were hired, D. G. Foreman and Miss Mattie Haight, who became Mrs. Foreman in 1886. The upper rooms of the building were finished in 1891, and the school board hired four teachers, including Mr. and Mrs. Foreman who taught until 1901.

On July 1, 1904, work was started on the new school at the west end of Main street. It was built of brick and stone and cost \$15,000. It had a large basement, a belfry tower, three classrooms on the first floor, three rooms on the second floor, and a room in the attic for industrial arts students. The building was ready for occupancy in January, 1905. Mrs. Arthur Netherton, Chatsworth, a member of the high

school graduating class that year, recalls that on moving day the students gathered their belongings and marched down Main street to their new quarters.

H. M. Rudolph was principal at that time, and the teachers were Deana Onken, Carrie Tilbury, Lelia Moody, and Sadie Worthington. Grade school classes, two to a room, used the first floor and the south room on the second floor, with the high school occupying the remaining space.

Until 1911, Melvin had only a three year high school. Students who wished to have a high school diploma took their fourth year at the Grand Prairie Seminary in Onarga. This school offered the third and fourth years of high school and the first two years of college, or a two-year commercial course. Melvin students usually went by train to Gilman, then transferred to another train to Onarga, where they boarded in private homes.

A class of five graduated in 1919, but the following year there were no graduates. Melvin had lost its accreditation because of crowded conditions, and the three members of the class of 1920, had to go elsewhere for their fourth year.



The new brick school building on west Main in 1905.



Melvin High School Built in 1922

The present high school building, located north of Second street, between Center and Green streets, was constructed in 1922, after which the old building was used for the grade school exclusively. Within a year the state returned the high school's accreditation. The new school provided classrooms, offices, kitchen and dining room for home economics, shop for industrial arts and agriculture, chemistry and physics laboratory, auditorium, library and a gymnasium with theater facilities. Until the Melvin-Sibley unit was formed in 1949, the grade school and the high school each had its separate board of education.

In 1942 the hot lunch program was started at the grade school where Edward Freehill had been principal since 1936. (Mr. Freehill retired in 1966, having taught in the Melvin school longer than any other teacher.) The first lunchroom was the northwest corner room on the second floor, used by an earlier generation of high school students as a study room, laboratory and classroom. A cob and coal-burning stove was installed in the cloakroom which became the kitchen. Each student contributed table service and paid ten cents for a hot lunch.

Henry Dutler, high school principal in 1937, originated the "senior class trip" that year. He and Mrs. Dutler took five graduating seniors in the Dutler car to Washington, D. C. and New York City, camping along the way. The trip was so educational and successful that each senior class from then until 1965 took a trip to the east immediately following graduation. These trips were made in private cars at first; later, school and charter buses were used.

Between 1945 and 1947, the one-room country schools around Melvin were closed and students from them came into town. Harold Boundy was the first bus driver. Edward Freehill used his family car for a year and then operated the school jeep for two years to transport pupils who lived off the bus route.

By 1947 enrollment had increased and a larger lunchroom was needed. An addition was built onto the southwest corner of the grade school, and the second-floor lunchroom became a classroom again.

Melvin and Sibley schools consolidated in 1949, with each town retaining its own grade school, first through sixth grades. The junior high school was located in Sibley, and Edward Freehill served as principal of both the junior high and the Sibley grade schools. Bill Coddington was principal of the Melvin-Sibley high school in Melvin; Miss Maude Whiteman was principal of the Melvin grade school; and Ralph Moore was unit superintendent. A single board of education was elected to supervise the three schools of the unit.

A large recreation room was added to the west side of the Melvin grade school in 1956. However, the grade school, in use since 1905, had become unsafe. A new, one-story building adjoining the east side of the high school, was completed in 1961. It contains



six classrooms, office space for the unit superintendent, Charles Roth, an all-purpose room, music room, and a cafeteria, used by both the grade and high schools.

From the years when farm boys stayed home from school during the planting and harvest seasons, and few girls finished high school unless they planned to become teachers, school attendance has become not only a privilege but mandatory. The "three R's" of 1871, just as basic now as they were one hundred years ago, are incorporated into a broad curriculum of college-preparatory and specialized courses aimed at fulfilling the needs and aptitudes of all students.

Education beyond high school is encouraged. Of the forty-one students in the 1971 graduating class, eighteen will attend college; five are enrolled in trade schools; one is entering nurse's training, and one will study x-ray technology.

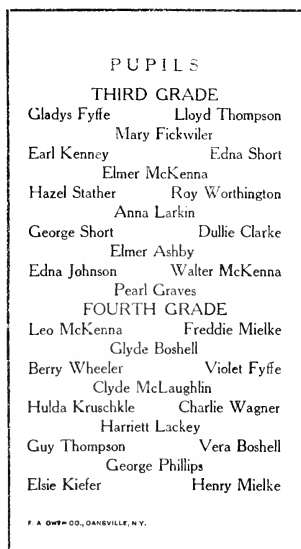
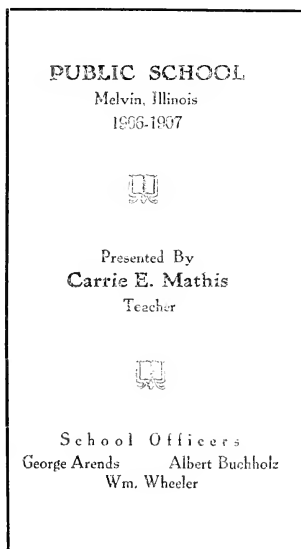


An old country schoolhouse. Back row from l. to r. Tate Ehmen, George Ehmen, Florence Beck, Mr. G. H. Whippy.

Middle row: Ellen McNeil, Anna Ehmen, Ed Schultz, Earl Otto, Alfred Steinman.

Front row: Robert McNeil, Raymond Steinman, Helen Geegan, Ruth Geegan, Floyd Otto and Herbert Schultz.

Souvenir program from the Melvin Public School shortly after it was occupied.



# Aerial View of



Melvin In 1971



# Melvin - Sibley Parent Teacher Association

The Melvin-Sibley Parents-Teachers Association originated in Sibley in 1929 as the Sibley PTA. Mrs. Alfred Larson was its first president. Although meetings were held in both Melvin and Sibley following consolidation in 1949, the formality of changing the name to "Melvin-Sibley PTA" did not come about until September, 1953.

Programs are designed to carry out the objects of the Parent-Teachers Association and deal with topics such as mental health, exceptional children, fluoridation, civil defense, first aid, new math, special education, guidance and social problems. Various departments within the school have contributed programs and exhibits. Speakers from foreign countries have also been featured.

The list of accomplishments is a long one. The Melvin-Sibley PTA helped administer the oral polio vaccine when it first became available and has sponsored dental fluoride treatments for students since 1954. It has purchased radios, record players, public address systems, and outdoor drinking fountains. Free milk and hot lunches have also been provided for students. The PTA has helped purchase band uniforms and lunchroom plates, and it has promoted full-time kindergarten, junior colleges, and bond issues. The annual PTA picnic, marking the end of the school year, has become a tradition in the community. One of the more unusual PTA activities was in 1940-41 when members helped can fruits and vegetables for the hot-lunch program. Funds have been raised from

square dances, paper drives, home talent shows, carnivals, basketball games, and soup suppers.

Membership reached its peak in 1957-1959 with 159 members, during Mrs. Albert Froidcoeur's term as president. In April, 1966, a special program honored Edward Freehill, who retired after thirty-four years of teaching. Mr. Freehill set the pattern for cooperation between the school and the PTA.

During the current school term, Mrs. Jane Gudenrath and Mrs. Ted Kendrick, president and vice-president, respectively, are serving second terms. Mrs. Philip Birkner is secretary and Mrs. Scooter Mize is treasurer.



Shown above is the class of 1917. L to r. Back row: William Mayo, Fred Wheeler. Middle: Crystal Buchholz, Lillian Arends, Pauline Arends. Front: Eula Cooper, Ella Beck, Leta Mohr.



1st and 2nd grade in Melvin, 1924.

Back, l. to r. Richard Grosenbach, Oscar Harshbarger, Margaret White, Ruthella Phillips, James Bell, Mary Inkster, Margaret Grosenbach.

Middle, l. to r. Ethel Streight, Geneva Shepard, Mary Duffy, Eugene Streight, Jane Hammerlund, Blanche White.

Front, l. to r. Marjorie Woodward, Ronald Gimbel, Annabelle Black - unknown, Iris Woodward, Homer Parrett, Loretta Dietterle.

# Melvin Home Extension

The Ford County Home Extension is part of the Cooperative Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, University of Illinois. The Melvin Unit is one of fifteen home extension units in the county.

"Home Bureau," as it was known until the last few years, was organized in 1936 while Hugh Triplett was county farm adviser. Juanita Glascock, who later became Mrs. C. E. Stabler, was the first home adviser.

For many years the Unit met in the upstairs room of the Farm Bureau building. The ladies purchased much of the kitchen equipment and served meals for various Farm Bureau and 4-H activities. Since the new Cooperative Extension building has been completed, meetings have been held there or in the homes of members.

Old records and programs indicate that the ladies in the earlier days were interested in many of the same topics that are discussed and presented today, such as

"Counting Calories," "Mental Hygiene," and "Recreation."

World War II brought some special problems for the homemaker. Programs included topics such as these: "Making Good Use of Clothing on Hand;" "Restyling Old Clothing;" "Living in the Tomorrow;" "Making Use of Leftovers;" and "War-time Hospitality." Saving waste fats and wastepaper was emphasized. Members went in groups to Kankakee to donate blood.

Marian Simon, home adviser from 1950 to 1959, served the greatest number of years. Her craftmaking skills are reflected in the homes of many members who learned their techniques under her direction. Mrs. Rebecca Mason is the most recent extension adviser, having departed Ford County in February, 1971. Mrs. Harriett Coomer, her successor, began her term in March, 1971.

Six charter members are still active in the Melvin Unit: Mrs. Ralph Busick, Mrs. Gilbert Dueringer, Mrs. O. E. Lippincott, Mrs. Louis Peters, Mrs. George Stilwell, and Mrs. Harry Strelluf. Two more charter members, Mrs. W. P. Kenward and Mrs. George Eppelheimer, reside in Melvin but are no longer active.



The Original meeting place of  
Ford County Home Extension



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Chatsworth

## Melvin Woman's Club



Junior Woman's Club Stunt Show in 1935.

The Melvin Woman's Club was organized in the spring of 1933 at the home of Mrs. Gilbert Dueringer. Mrs. A. C. Watson was the first president, and Mrs. George Iehl the first vice-president. The club affiliated with the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs that same year and with the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1938. The purposes of the club include community service, the promotion of intellectual culture, and companionship.

The formation of a Junior Woman's Club was sponsored in 1934. This group was composed of young unmarried women who were responsible for the beginning of the present Melvin Library. The Junior Club disbanded in 1943, and most of its members joined the Melvin Woman's Club.

One of the club's major projects was assisting

the Melvin Library. Funds for the purchase of new books were contributed regularly for many years. In 1943 the club sponsored a Tag Day which netted \$228 for the benefit of the library.

A movie projector, presented to the high school in 1939, was the first projector to be owned by the school. In 1950, \$100 was given to the Melvin-Sibley school unit to help purchase band uniforms.

The club has contributed to a number of scholarships which have enabled high school students to attend music, conservation and art\*summer camps. Various projects of the Illinois Federation and the General Federation of Women's Clubs receive support, as do local projects including the Red Cross, Cancer Fund, Salvation Army, Boy Scouts, and community Christmas baskets.



Three members have served as president of the Ford County Federation: Mrs. John Kenward, Mrs. Roy Thackeray, and Mrs. Lowell Dueringer.

The present officers are: Mrs. James Neuschwander,

president; Mrs. John Donovan, vice-president; and Mrs. Marilyn Steinman, secretary-treasurer. Two charter members, Mrs. Gilbert Dueringer and Mrs. Leroy Arends, are still active in the club.

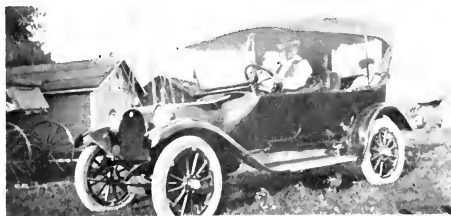


A birdseye view of Melvin around 1921-2.

## Independent Order of Odd Fellows

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Lodge No. 157, was instituted in Melvin March 6, 1888. It

consolidated with Paxton Lodge No. 418 on February 16, 1948. Paxton Lodge closed August 18, 1969.



Shown above is a shiny new 1915 car, with C. H. Reitz, driver.

## American Legion Auxiliary

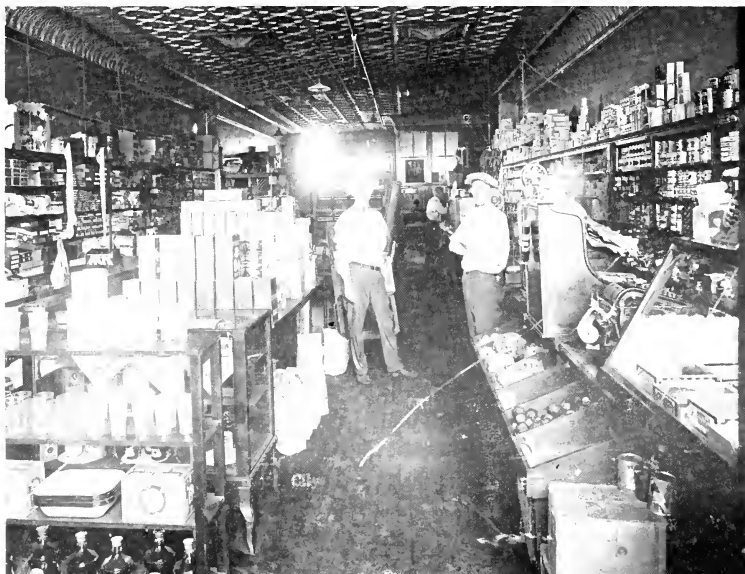
The American Legion Auxiliary to Post No. 642 was chartered on December 15, 1932. Glyde Dietterle was the president, and Iva Arends and Irene Thompson were first and second vice president, respectively. Other officers were: Elizabeth McLaughlin, chaplain; Eva Spellmeyer, treasurer; Gussie Kiener, historian; Arlene Thompson, secretary, and Bernice Beck, sergeant-at-arms.

The Auxiliary engages in a number of activities. With the help of other patriotic organizations, it sponsors a public program on Veterans' Day and Memorial Day, and provides wreaths and flags for the graves of the Veterans. Another yearly project is the sponsorship of

a girl from the high school junior class as a delegate to Girls' State, which is held in June at Jacksonville, Illinois.

School children compete in annual essay and poppy poster contests, sponsored by the organization. The Auxiliary remembers Melvin servicemen with a cash gift and a greeting card at Christmas, and contributes to each organization represented by the United Fund.

Members have collected thousands of coupons given by the manufacturer of a dog food. These are used to secure leader dogs for blind veterans. Vouchers for almost \$4,000 worth of donations have been credited to the Melvin Auxiliary.



Do you suppose there were many coupons in products when Glen Thompson had this store?

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GERMANVILLE TOWNSHIP

Each month the organization gives ten dollars to hospitals for their cigarette funds and also supplies favors for hospital trays. It has contributed generously to Child Welfare, the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's School at Normal, Illinois, and to the seven-point rehabilitation program of the Auxiliary.

Mrs. Irene Shives, rehabilitation chairman for the past ten years, has been in charge of taking contributions of used clothing to the Danville and Manteno hospitals. She also supplies the Veterans' Craft Shop in Chicago with carpet rags and used stamps for soldiers' transportation needs.

Mrs. Grace Boundy is now serving her fifth year as president, Adelaide Dixon is first vice-president, and Dorothy Holmes is second vice-president. The other officers include: Marge Freehill, secretary; Ruth Steinman, treasurer; Anna Gudenrath, chaplain; Pearl Roberts, historian; Anna Hays, sergeant-at-arms, and Ena Thompson, assistant sergeant-at-arms.

## Melvin State Bank

John Iehl and George T. Arends established the Melvin State Bank as a private banking house in November, 1890. In those early days it was known as "Iehl & Co. Bankers."

The first charter was issued to John Iehl, George T. Iehl, Henry Arends, Andrew Arends, and W. P. Kenward, on August 31, 1920, and it became the Commercial State Bank of Melvin. On February 4, 1959, the name was changed to Melvin State Bank.

Muryl M. Sturm is president; C. Glen Miller, vice-president; James O. Arnold, executive vice-president and cashier, and Margaret B. Roth, assistant cashier.



Iehl and Co. Bankers - 1905



George T. Arends



John Iehl



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VAN'S INSURANCE AGENCY & PHOTOGRAPHIC  
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# Boy Scouts of America

Boy Scouting in Melvin began in 1941 when a charter for Troop 31 was issued by Arrowhead Council of Champaign. Lowell Dueringer was the first scoutmaster, and the Melvin Community Club was the sponsoring organization. In 1946 the troop number was changed to Troop 34, under the sponsorship of Melvin Lodge A. F. & A. M., with Milton Heitzman serving as scoutmaster.

There was a lull in scouting activity until 1953, when Russell Taylor as scoutmaster chartered Troop 34, under the sponsorship of VFW Post 6334. This sponsorship continued through 1968, with 370 "boy years" represented on the official charter. Among the six men who served as scoutmaster during these years William McBride's term (six years) was the longest.

In 1962, with Jack Donovan as Explorer Adviser, under the sponsorship of the Melvin Lions Club, the Explorer Scouts camped at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico for a two-week wilderness camping experience.

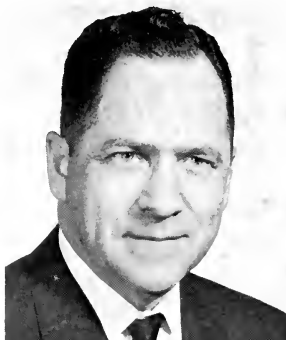
In 1963, again under the leadership of Jack Donovan, the Explorers, enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime boyhood experience when they spent a week on a United Nations Navy destroyer out of Mayport, Florida. Few Explorer Scouts in the United States are afforded such an opportunity. The boys worked on several money-making projects requiring community support to finance these trips.

In 1966 Explorer Adviser Jack Moody took eight boys on a rugged canoe trip in the wilds of Minnesota. There they rowed and portaged five days, with only a map and rationed supplies, coupled with their Scouting skills, to get them back to home port.

Cub Scouting for boys eight through eleven years of age has been sponsored continuously by Melvin VFW Post 6334 since 1955, when Clarence Bitner as cubmaster, and three den mothers, Mrs. Harold Davis, Mrs. Irene Dale, and Mrs. Lucille Wright, began the program with nineteen boys.

In the ensuing years Raymond DeFries, Floyd Ford, James Arnold, Martin Watterson, Willis Janssen, Clifford Waller, Millard Cox, and Charles Nielsen have served as scoutmaster. The major work in the individual dens has been done by thirty-seven different women whose job it was to supervise the 395 "boy years" spent in Cubbing. Present den mothers are Mrs. James Arnold, Mrs. Dayo E. Thompson, and Mrs. Glenn Claus.

Until his death in 1965, Roy D. "Tick" Thackeray was Neighborhood Commissioner for all local scouting groups, lending much time and energy to local needs. At the same time, he represented the area on Northern District committees.



Mr. Scouter, Roy D. "Tick" Thackeray, Neighborhood Commissioner and scouting booster for many years in Melvin.





Hunters Field, Melvin Scouts Athletic Area.

With tremendous financial support from the community, a Scout cabin was built in 1961 on the west side of the Melvin Fairgrounds lake. It provides an ideal location for activities throughout the year.

The summer ball program is in charge of volunteer coaches, while the Cub Scouts are usually coached by the cubmaster. James Arnold and William Curtis have coached the past three years. The older boys were coached by Rev. Ronald Krueger for several years and during the past six years by Wendell Thackeray.

A baseball field was constructed on the northwest



Melvin Scouts' Cabin.

corner of the Melvin Fairgrounds in 1959. This field was built and is maintained with money collected from visiting hunters enlisted in the program during the hunting season—hence, the name "Hunter's Field". For many years John Pool has helped organize the farmers in this project each autumn.

Throughout the years, typical Scouting activities such as Council Camporees, District Skill Days of Competition, Camp Drake sessions near Danville, Illinois, and local overnight camps have been enjoyed by the Scouts and adult Scouters of the Melvin community.

## Girl Scouts of America

Girl Scouting in Melvin was organized in 1965 under the direction of Mrs. J. R. Heien, who was junior leader until 1970. In that year Mrs. Dayo E. Thompson became the leader for girls in grades four through six.

Brownie scouts, for girls in the second and third grades, were under the direction of Mrs. Don Allen and Mrs. Harry Hanson in 1965. Mrs. Robert Painter now has the Brownie troop. Mrs. Don Trimmer led the first Cadette troop, composed of seventh and eighth grade girls, in 1969. The following year a combined Melvin-Sibley Cadette troop was formed with Mrs. J. R. Heien.

Summer Day Camp, with five daily sessions, has been provided each year by local adult volunteers. In

1965 and 1966 the camp was held in cooperation with Gibson City.

By 1968 the MARS (Melvin and Roberts, Sibley) Neighborhood was formed, and day camp was held at the Melvin Fairgrounds for all Girl Scouts of the neighborhood. Mrs. Robert Sinn is Neighborhood Commissioner.

The Green Meadows Council, to which the Melvin units belong, operates several established camp areas. One of these is Camp Wa-Ha-Na-Ha located east of Gilman, Illinois. This facility is for not-so-rugged camping experiences. It is maintained by funds from the annual Girl Scout Cookie Sale which is generously supported by the Melvin community.

## Melvin VFW Auxiliary



This picture shows J. S. Holverson in his rural mail delivery wagon in 1910. Holverson and Jake Miller were the first rural carriers.

The Ladies Auxiliary to Melvin Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 6334 was organized on July 11, 1949. This women's group is a "service" organization, not a social order. It is composed of the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of soldiers, sailors, and marines who have seen foreign service.

The monies earned by the Melvin Auxiliary have been contributed to national, department, and district projects for veterans' hospitals, rehabilitation of veterans, child welfare, cancer research, and the VFW National Home. Each year members sell VFW Buddy Poppies.

Local community service projects provide aid for hospitals and nursing homes in the area, books for the library, flags for schools, community Christmas baskets, and aid for local charities and local servicemen. The members assist with Memorial and Veterans' Day programs and help with the maintenance of the local VFW post home on Melvin's Main street.

Charter members who have retained their membership are Grace Arnold, Margaret Roth, Mary Cothorn, Minnie Cothorn, Ruth Donovan, Geraldine Harms, Evelyn McPherson, Myrtle Schneider, Aldene Thackeray, Emma Thompson, Vada Timcke and Ardelle Walle.

Past presidents, in the order they held office

include the following persons: Ruth Donovan, Aldene Thackeray, Rita Schroen, Mary Cothorn, Margaret Roth, Ardelle Walle, Rose Day, Marilyn Jansen, Geraldine Harms, Myrtle Schneider, Geraldine Gravlin, JoAnn Milligan, and Grace Arnold.



Shown above is a Red Cross Aide during World War I.



Feeding the hens was a daily chore.



They had troubles, too.

## Melvin Veterans of Foreign Wars

The Melvin Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 6334 was authorized to organize and form a post on May 27, 1946, with forty-five members signing the charter. The membership has now grown to eighty.

The parent organization, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, established in 1899, is the oldest veterans organization in the nation. Membership is restricted to those who have been honorably discharged and have served their country overseas in time of emergency. The official insignia, the Cross of Malta, is a real foreign service decoration, recognized and protected by the United States government as such.

Following are the objectives of the VFW: To insure the national security through maximum military strength; to speed the rehabilitation of the nations' disabled and needy veterans; to assist the widows and orphans and the dependents of disabled and needy

veterans; and to promote Americanism through education in patriotism, and constructive service to the members' own communities.

The local VFW post contributes to the VFW National Home near Eaton Rapids, Michigan, a home for widows and orphans of deceased or disabled members. It aids comrades in distress, veterans' hospitals local charities, and community projects. The uniformed color guard participates in patriotic programs and parades at home and away and at military funerals for departed comrades.

In addition, the Melvin organization has sponsored Cub Scouts and Boys Scouts in Melvin for nineteen years and also has developed and managed Little League and softball teams for boys. It maintains a VFW park for the community to use for picnics and overnight camping.



In 1946 the Melvin VFW purchased the former Melvin State Bank building from the late Fred Howk for a post home, which it recently remodeled. Rooms on both the first and second floors are available for rental for other community affairs.

In March, 1971, Melvin VFW Post No. 6334 observed its 25th anniversary with a dinner party and program. Charter members were honored.



Shown in this picture is an example of sidewalk advertising in 1916.

## Grand Army of the Republic



Some of Melvin's first G.A.R. members on Decoration Day at the Melvin Cemetery

Melvin Post No. 500, Grand Army of the Republic, was organized on March 18th, 1885. Mr. P. E. Brown, Commander of the Chatsworth Post, installed the following officers: James Dixon, Post Commander; Thomas Ellis, Senior Vice Commander; Lon Dilley, Junior Vice Commander; Dr. E. B. Perry, Quartermaster; Dr. E. Perry, Secretary; P. B. Leach, Chaplain; William Hunt, Officer of the Day; Samuel Shreves, Post Guard;

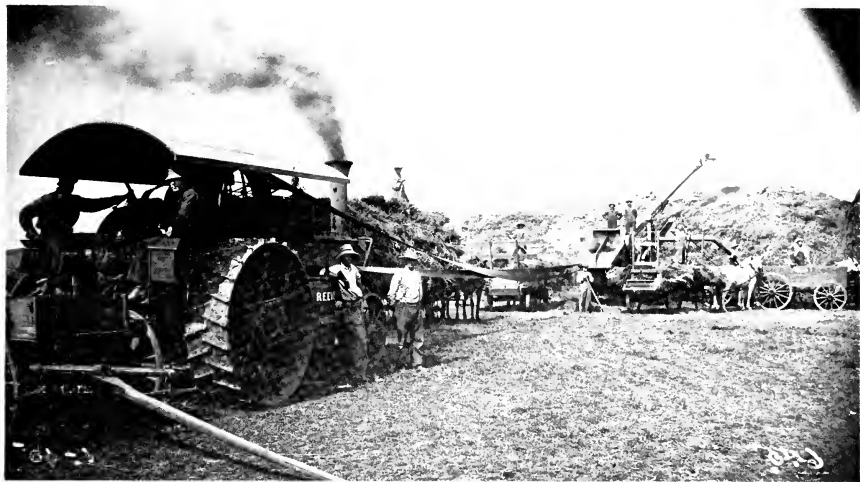
James Stephens, and George Dixon, Quartermaster Sergeant.

The Post aided the widows of Civil War veterans, sponsored Memorial Day services, and bought headstones for soldiers' unmarked graves. The last secretary's minutes for the Post are dated December 10, 1898.

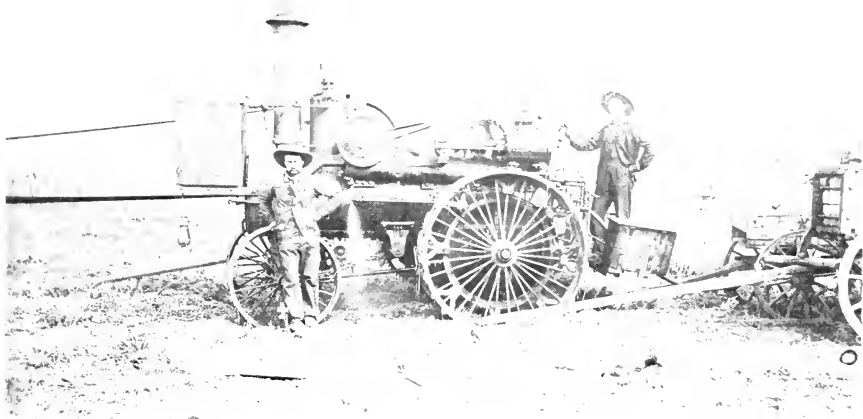


Women's Relief Corps and G.A.R. Women's Relief Corps erected monument to the Unknown Dead.





Shocks of oats loaded on wagons await the separating process of the threshing machine.



Taking a moment's ease from their labors are Pete Fickwiler, left, and Amos Thackeray.

# Melvin Lions Club

The first Melvin Lions Club meeting, which was sponsored by the Gibson City Lions Club, took place on May 1, 1952, at the American Legion Hall. At the second meeting, on May 15, 1952, the club voted to hold its meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday nights of each month. Charter Night was June 12, 1952, and of those forty charter members, thirteen are still active in the club today.

Meetings were held in the Masonic dining room. The meals were prepared and served by one of the local churches until September, 1961, when the meeting place was changed to the Evergreen Cafe.

Ralph Moore was the first president. Lions Charles Nielsen, C. Glen Miller, and James O. Arnold have served as zone chairmen, providing local representation on the District Governor's cabinet. James Neuschwander is currently serving as president.

The first major project of the club was to find a doctor for Melvin. A committee was appointed and in June, 1953, Leroy Arends, Henry Schaeffer, C. E. Wilson, and T. D. Thackeray went to Kankakee to interview Dr. A. L. deMola. As a result of these efforts, Dr. deMola came to Melvin in July, 1953.

The first safety project, on November 29, 1952, was placing Scotch tape reflectors on forty bicycles. In 1959 the club assisted in planting 283 trees to replace the many dead elm trees. In 1961 the Lions placed trash barrels on Melvin streets to help keep the village clean and attractive. In November, 1963, a committee was appointed to work with the Village Board in placing street signs in Melvin. A year later the task was accomplished. Other projects included planting more trees, decorating the streets for Christmas and painting parking lines on the streets.

The club conducts a Halloween carnival for Melvin youngsters each year, a project begun in 1952. It also annually presents a trophy to the high school boy

who is selected for his good sportsmanship in the athletic program. Gerald Lackey, the first recipient of this award, is now an active Lion. Each year since 1956, local Lions have sent a delegate to Boys State; Patrick Freehill was the first boy to receive this honor.

The one outstanding project of all Lions clubs and Lions International is to help the blind. Institutions supported by Lions International are the Leader Dog School, the Hadley School for the Blind, and Camp Lions, where blind children can experience camping activities under proper supervision and guidance.

The Melvin Lions Club has helped local persons with sight handicaps by giving record players or by assisting in securing talking book records. Over the years the club has always been ready to help children who need eye examinations or glasses but who are unable to get them for themselves.

Two meetings each year are designated as "Ladies' Night." Another custom is "Farmers' Night," when



Left to right: Hans Johannsen, J. S. Thompson, Henry Siems, Mrs. Harris, H. Dienelt, Alex Krushke, unable to identify boy and John Buchholz in front of what is now The Evergreen Cafe, meeting place of Melvin Lions Club.

each Lion member invites a farmer friend to the meeting in order to develop a better understanding between the farmers and the non-farmers.

# Royal Neighbors of America



Louisa Kaufman, Charter Member  
and first Chancellor.

Rose Valley Camp No. 986, Royal Neighbors of America, was organized April 26, 1898, with thirteen beneficial and ten social members. Ella Thackeray, a charter member, gave it the name "Rose Valley" because of the many rose gardens in the community. During the early years of its organization, the Camp met in the hall of the Modern Woodmen, an affiliate society. It now meets in the members' homes.

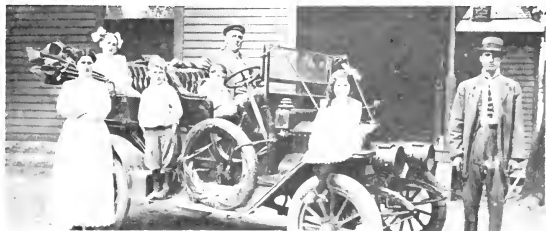
The first officers of the Camp were as follows:

Oracle, Emma L. Swisher; Recorder, Clara E. Gedelman; Receiver, Helena Whippy; Vice Oracle, Carrie Holverson; Chancellor, Louisa M. Kaufman; Inner Sentinel, Frances McDaniel, and Outer Sentinel, Mary Underwood.

The Royal Neighbors is a fraternal organization whose purpose is to write life insurance for the protection of its members. At present sixty members are covered by \$75,500 worth of life insurance. The society belongs to the Ford County Association of Royal Neighbors of America.

Rose Valley Camp donates to civic projects such as the Community Fund and Christmas baskets, and in 1943 members purchased \$6,525 worth of war bonds. The group also supports a Royal Neighbors of America home in Davenport, Iowa, and a scholarship fund for Royal Neighbor college students.

The local organization has eleven fifty-year members: Julia Kenward, Ida Bond, Coletta Bickel, Estelle Dickman, Margaret Strelluf, Beulah Sheppard, Grace Rudolph, Carrie Dieterle, Gwendolyn Nelson, Leora Boundy and Ethel Wurzbarger. Louisa Kaufman, who died in 1957, was the last surviving charter member.



Mr. and Mrs. Chester Bond and family and Sam Kief around  
1912 Maxwell. Mrs. Bond and daughter Cletus Thackeray  
are members of RNA.

# Ford County Fair

William Haworth, the vocational agriculture teacher, had an idea: Why not sponsor an annual community fair? His plan drew support from others, including John Beck, Clarence "Tiny" Wilson, Walter C. Iehl, W. C. Holmes, G. F. Howk, and Roscoe Buchholz. And so it was that in 1926, the Ford County Fair of Melvin was born. It was called the "Melvin Community Fair" then, however. Not until 1941, when the fair was incorporated, did it become the "Ford County Fair of Melvin," upon a motion made by M. I. Kendrick at a regular meeting of the Fair Association.

One tent housed all exhibits at that first fair, with



Debbie and Bill Shives are ready for the children's parade at the Melvin Fairgrounds.



Children from parade at high school fairground.

the high school gymnasium being used for the household exhibits. Entertainment during the early years consisted of a football game and one or two professional acts. Each year the fair grew in size. Finally, exhibits, tents, and the Wilson Show filled the grounds and several adjacent lots.

The quality of the entertainment improved also, and the fair became famous for its "free acts." Perhaps the top act of all time was the Hustrei Troop, a high-wire act which won world-wide acclaim. Another important part of the entertainment was the dance. Orchestras, such as Ray Bozarth and Tiny Hill, played, and the customers paid five cents per dance. Later, all-evening tickets were sold. In 1953 a Guy Lombardo ticket cost \$2.50.

ADMIT ONE

Ford County Fair  
Of Melvin

Wednesday  
September 9, 1953

No 0



THE SWEETEST MUSIC THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN

**GUY LOMBARDO**  
and his Royal Canadians

*Ford County Fair of Melvin*  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

No 0  
Dance Ticket.

Est. Price ..... \$2.17  
Fed. Tax ..... .43  
TOTAL ..... \$2.50

Not Good If Detached

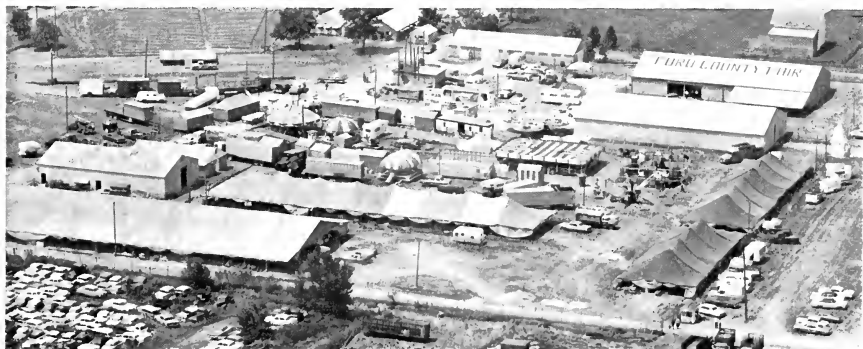
Other famous bands performing at the Melvin fair were Eddie Howard, Art Kassel, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, and Jan Garber. This era passed and the young people turned to rock-and-roll groups such as the "One-Eyed Jacks." Modern entertainment includes a demolition derby, beauty pageant, tractor pull, home talent show, and the dances.

By 1951, the fair had outgrown the space north of the high school. The Fair Association sold six residential lots on north Center street, and used this money to purchase seventeen acres of land at the east edge of Melvin from Harry Benz. In 1955 seven more acres of land adjoining the fairgrounds were purchased from S. E. Shives, making a total of twenty-five acres.

The first permanent building on the new site was a 30' x 90' concrete block building for the household exhibits. Other buildings have been added, until the present appraisal of the grounds is now set at \$100,000. In addition to the buildings, there is also a small lake and a bleacher area capable of seating 3,000 persons.

In April, 1956, an agreement with the Ford County 4-H Club gave that organization permission to hold its fair on the Melvin fairgrounds each year. The 4-H group donated \$4,000 to the building fund for this privilege.

Premiums of \$56,000 are now offered each year in the livestock, vegetable, grain, and household exhibits. The following figures show the contrast in amounts given in premiums in 1932 with the 1971 amounts shown in parentheses: beef, \$85 (\$11,325); dairy \$184 (\$12,405); hogs, \$120 (\$10,507); and sheep, \$45 (\$9,618).



Aerial view of Melvin Fairgrounds 1970.

## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

C. T. Wilson	President
G. F. Hawk	Vice President
A. B. Lundy	Treasurer
W. C. Iehl	Secretary

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

C. T. Wilson	T. D. Thackeray
Carl Weber	Prof. Edgar S. Amrine
Raymond Steinman	

### COMMITTEES

<b>Music and Attractions</b>	<b>Concessions</b>
J. J. Long	G. A. Roland
G. A. Roland	L. C. Arends
Walter Arends	<b>Fair Book and Exhibits</b>
L. C. Arends	Prof. Edgar S. Amrine
Harold Freehill	<b>Advertising</b>
<b>Grounds</b>	W. C. Iehl
G. F. Lippencott	J. A. Thompson
A. B. Arends	W. F. Kaufman
LoRoy Arends	W. R. Linderhof
<b>Tents</b>	Remus Curtis
W. C. Holmes	Prof. Edgar S. Amrine
W. C. Iehl	H. H. Hackett
J. E. Beck	<b>Tickets and Gate</b>
<b>Light Committee</b>	R. C. Buchholz
A. B. Lundy	D. E. Thompson
W. J. Boundy	Prof. A. C. Watson
B. F. Kaufman	Jerry Freehill

Dr. B. C. Wright, Veterinary in Charge

## Officers and Committees from 1932 Fair Book.

Clarence "Tiny" Wilson and Walter C. Iehl served as president and secretary respectively during the early years. Other secretaries have been Ralph M. Otto, C. D. Thompson, Louis A. Freehill, Arnold B. Rowand, and D. M. Townsend. T. D. Thackeray has served as president since 1936.



A 1914 threshing run. Don't those air conditioned cabs look more inviting than this?



Remember those hours and hours of cooking on the old cookstove and washing dishes right up until time to serve lunch? But what a good chance it was to exchange recipes, ideas and just plain gossip.



There was wonderful neighborly companionship, but it was still a hot, prickly, dirty job.

## Ford County Boots and Saddle Club

The Ford County Boots and Saddle Club was organized in June, 1969. A meeting and potluck supper are held the first Saturday of each month in the secretary's office at the Melvin Fairgrounds.

Activities include an annual horse show, summer trail rides, and participation in parades in area towns. Last fall members assisted with parking cars at the M & W Gear Company Power Show at Stanford, Illinois.



Albert Trimmer and Bill Boundy looking sharp in their fancy rig.

They also perform these duties at the Ford County Fair at Melvin.

Current officers are as follows: Irvin Sledge, Melvin, president; Evan Leonard, Gibson City, vice-president; and Mary Jo Kingsley, Gibson City, secretary.



Ed Beck and Alf Ehmen in their runabout.



Commander Millard Dixon presenting Life Membership in American Legion to Congressman Les Arends on "Les Arends Day", May 27, 1960.

## American Legion Post 642

The American Legion Post 642, of Melvin, was formed in March, 1919, by the veterans of World War I. Their objective was to honor their comrades killed in World War I, and to provide financial and medical assistance to the many veterans who were wounded and needed help. To this day, Melvin Post 642 assists veterans entering hospitals and gives financial aid to those organizations needing help, as well as to individuals in the community.

Following are the names of surviving members of the original post: George Arends, Leslie Arends, LeRoy Arends, Ormond Brownlee, Remus Curtis, John Gudenrath, Obed Lippincott, Clyde McLaughlin, Louis Peters, Ralph Roberts, Henry Siems, C. D. Thompson, and Clyde Wilson, Sr.

Post 642 celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in

1969. Unfortunately, early records of the organization were burned during the 1950's; therefore, a complete account is impossible to obtain.

Present officers include the following persons: Lloyd A. Falck, commander; Robert Hornickel, vice commander; Mahlon Dixon, adjutant; Emerson Muehlenfort, finance officer.



Shown above is an old fashioned oats binder.

This 1865 Hearse carried Abraham Lincoln to his final resting place in Springfield, Illinois



This page sponsored through the courtesy of

EASTERN ILLINOIS POWER COOPERATIVE

Paxton

DANFORTH FUNERAL HOME

Roberts



## Melvin Lodge No. 811, A. F. & A. M.

Melvin Lodge No. 811, A. F. & A. M. was organized and received its charter from the state Grand Lodge on October 6, 1891. Bart Holmes was worshipful master of the first lodge, E. B. Perry, senior warden, and J. A. Timmons, junior warden. Other charter members were E. G. Collins, L. S. Heath, J. D. Carroll, C. E. Chapin, J. Cothorn, Jacob Gedelman and G. S. Larkin.

The lodge celebrated its golden anniversary in 1941, and observed its seventy-fifth year with a dinner at the Evergreens Cafe in 1966. A membership of over 100 has been maintained for many years.

Six men have held membership for over fifty years: Charles Milligan, C. W. McLaughlin, Henry C. Dutler, LeRoy Arends, Arthur Netherton (sixty-four years), and Joe A. Mies (sixty-two years).

Members who held offices for many years include the following persons: Dr. H. N. Boshell, worshipful master from 1900 to 1915; W. P. Kenward, secretary from 1924 to 1939; C. D. Thompson, secretary from 1939 to 1955; and Millard Dixon, secretary from 1955 to 1971.



LeRoy Arends - one 50-year member.

Present officers are as follows: Larry Dueringer, worshipful master; Millard Dixon, senior warden; Jack Moody, junior warden; Muryl Sturm, treasurer; James Steinman, secretary; Cecil Kennedy, chaplain; Leonard Stiegman, senior deacon; Donald Clark, junior deacon; William Frye, senior steward; Glen Miller, junior steward; J. Henry Hummell, marshal; and C. D. Thompson, tyler.



Dr. Boshell's house on South Green is shown above. Frances Kenward's home is built on the foundation.



In 1922 Ralph Thackeray installed this homemade radio, amplifier and antenna in his 1918 Model T Ford.

# Melvin Fire Department

In the years before 1912, Melvin was protected from fire by volunteer bucket brigades. There were three main cisterns in the village: one at the corner of First and Crossley streets, a second at the corner of Main and Crossley streets, and the third on the south side of Main street between Center and Green streets.

The volunteer firemen of those early years were hampered by the lack of water, water pressure, and equipment for fighting fires. When a fire did occur, it was usually impossible to save the building on fire and most of the efforts of the firemen were directed to saving surrounding buildings. One volunteer of those early bucket brigades attempted to carry a tub of water by himself to fight a large crib fire at the end of Main street and had only a gallon or two of water left in the tub when he reached the blaze.

Following the building of the Melvin waterworks in 1912, water from hydrants was available for fire-fighting. A two-wheel cart, pulled by men, was used to carry the hose.



The Ford Grain Co. elevator as it looked before the big fire in 1970.

In the early 1930's, a chemical truck was devised by the firemen. This furnished pressure for country fires and was used effectively numerous times.

The present volunteer fire department was established in 1949 in cooperation with Roberts. Thus the official name of the organization is "Roberts-Melvin Community Fire Protection District." The first trustees were: Arthur D. Seng of Roberts, and Arnold B. Rowand and Albert Reitz of Melvin. At present, Raymond Kietzman of Loda has replaced Arnold Rowand.

The present equipment at Melvin includes three large pumper trucks. They are housed in a modern block building on Center street just north of the business district. The firehouse has a kitchen which is used by firemen and their families who have formed a social group which meets regularly for dinners and parties. Funds for these events are provided by each fireman donating a share of his attendance pay.

Those who have served as Fire Chief since 1930 are: Charles Hodges, Roy D. Fickwiler, Ben Hoekstra, T. D. Thackeray, and Kenneth Gravlin. The present officers are: Fred W. Thackeray, Chief; Don Allen, Assistant Chief; Floyd Ford, Assistant Chief; Victor Hasenauer, treasurer; and Donald Trimmer secretary.

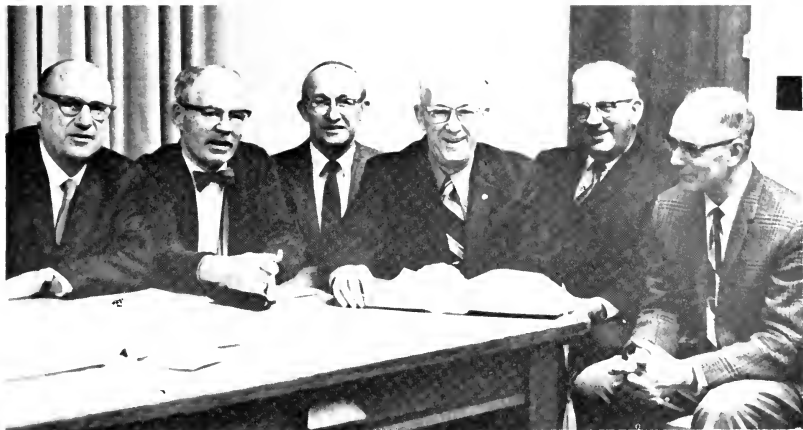


Melvin's motorized units that replaced our man-pulled cart.

This page sponsored through the courtesy of

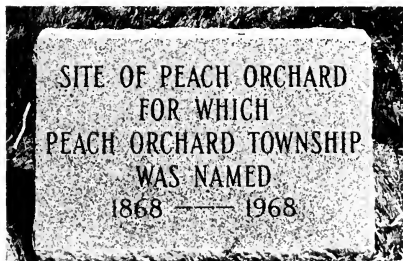
## FORD GRAIN CO., INC.

Melvin



Pictured above are the members of Peach Orchard Board: Earl E. DeWall, Supervisor; E. J. Freehill, Clerk; Francis Walle, Auditor; Harold Boundy, Road Commissioner; Clarence Brinkman and Delmar Wiegel, Auditors.

## Peach Orchard Township

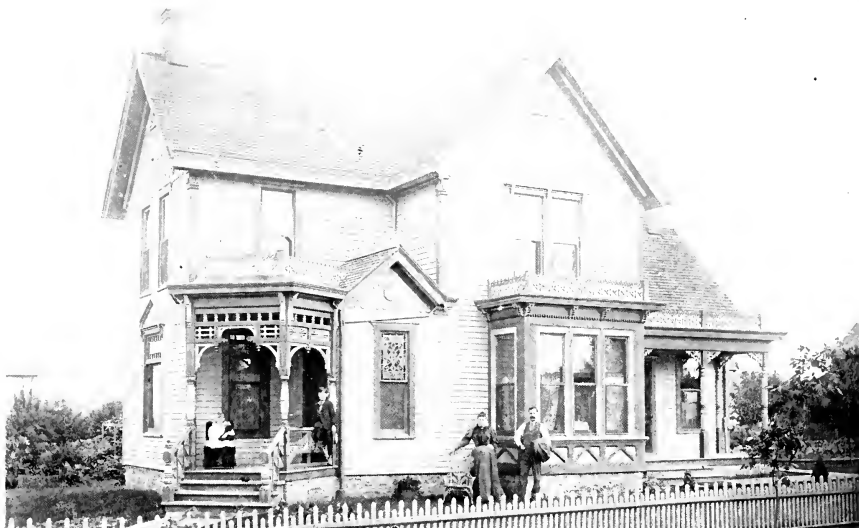


Peach Orchard monument located 3 miles west and 2½ miles north of Melvin.

Peach Orchard Township was established on September 15, 1868. Exactly one hundred years later on September 15, 1968, a historical marker was dedicated and placed on the farm land where the peach orchard was planted in 1855 and from which the township derived its name. Supervisors since 1900 include O. K. Boshell, John Iehl, Onno Arends, H. K. Reehl, George T. Iehl, W. C. Iehl, Earl E. DeWall (longest serving: 1951-1971) and John Donovan (elected April, 1971).

This page sponsored through the courtesy of

## PEACH ORCHARD TOWNSHIP



These houses are classic examples of 1890 architecture. The J. A. Schafer house, above is pictured in 1897. It has since been remodeled extensively into its present style, the home of Charles and Mary Lippincott on north Green Street. Below is shown the Henry Spellmeyer house built on north Center Street in 1894. It burned in 1969. Notice the picket fences, board sidewalks, built in eavesspouts, elaborate ornamentation, cedar shingles, and out buildings.



# Melvin Newspapers

Melvin's first newspaper, The Melvin Transcript, was first published in 1893. The pressroom was located in the basement of the Arends building. Mr. I. T. Van Note was the founder of the paper and had as his assistants A. B. Stansbury as foreman and Wesley Ashbey as "printer's devil."

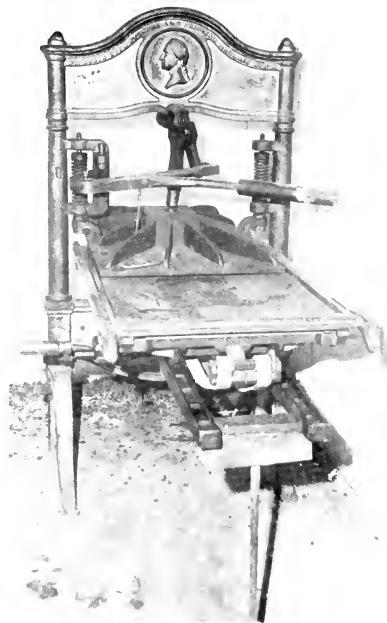
After publishing the paper for nine months, Mr. Van Note sold it to F. R. Osborn who continued editing the paper for the next six years.

During the next three years, the paper was published by the following: C. J. Ayle (3 months), A. E. Potts of Gibson City (1 year), Mrs. Fred Carroll (1 year), and J. L. Hayden of Sibley (1 year).

In 1904 the paper was purchased by C. W. Cunningham who, in that year, published a "Citizens' and Business Men's Edition" of the Melvin Transcript. Its editor described the publication as "An Historical Number, with Sketches of the Business Life of the Leading Merchants and Professional Men of Melvin, together with a Chronicle of the Leading Events in the History of our Village."

Mr. W. O. Sanders of Roberts was the next owner and publisher of the paper and he sold it to Bill Jones in 1908 at which time the name was changed to The Melvin Motor.

Mr. G. F. Howk purchased the paper in 1910 and continued its publication until 1932 when his son-in-law, T. D. Thackeray, took over as editor and publisher. In 1945 the name was changed to Ford County Press when the Roberts Herald was purchased by Mr. Thackeray who combined it with The Melvin Motor.



This press printed the 1893 Transcript, and is still in operable condition, and owned by the Ford County Press.



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This page sponsored through the courtesy of

FORD COUNTY PRESS, Melvin

FRED'S TV SERVICE, Melvin  
and THE MELVIN AUTO WASH

## Founding Fathers . . .

Hunt, pioneers from New Jersey and Muskingum County, Ohio. He married Mary Griffin, of Wenona, in 1854. Their four children were born in La Salle County. William, the only son, died in 1863 at the age of two years, and is buried in Cumberland cemetery, near Wenona. Mary, Esther, and Jessie were born on the Hunt farm, near Wenona.

The family came to Ford County in 1868. It was through Enoch Hunt's efforts that the Illinois Central Railroad was laid across the south side of his farm in 1871. He was also responsible for securing a Paxton surveyor to survey sixty-five acres of his farm on which to build a town. He platted the first and second additions, named the street, and on July 18, 1871, dedicated the town of Melvin, named in honor of the president of the new railroad. Some wished to call it "Huntsville," but Enoch declined the honor.

The Hunts lived on this farm until about 1904 when they moved into their new home on the corner of Main and Hunt streets. He built a big barn in which he kept his bay horse, Alex. It was ever his delight to gather up the little folks after school for a ride in his red cutter in the winter and in a buggy in the summer.



Enoch S. Hunt

Enoch S. Hunt . . .

Enoch S. Hunt was born in Marshal County, Illinois, October 16, 1833, son of Cornelius and Elizabeth Sidle



A cutter full of children.

Mrs. Hunt died in 1906, and Enoch died in 1917. Mary married William Shreves and they had two children, Genevieve and Richard. Their descendants live in Hammond, Indiana. Esther married Thomas Ellis and their only child, a son, lives in Colorado. Jessie married David Bookwalter and had one son, Claude. Claude's daughter, Maureen, lives in California. There are not very many living descendants of Enoch Hunt.

#### **William B. Holmes . . .**

William B. Holmes, first settler in Peach Orchard Township, was born in Derbyshire, England September 23, 1820, on a farm which had been in the Holmes family for four hundred years. At the age of fifteen, his father apprenticed him to a coach-maker for a term of six years.

In 1849, he and his brother, Charles, sailed from Bristol, England, to New York City, a forty-nine-day trip. He started west, arriving at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where he purchased forty acres of land which he cleared of timber and farmed for a few years. Then he moved to Vermilion County, Illinois, and worked as a carpenter until 1855, when he came to what is now Peach Orchard Township.

He purchased 320 acres of government land and built a house and in 1847, he brought his family to the new home. He plowed the first prairie sod in the township.

Mr. Holmes' wife, Eliza Wren, was born in Bristol, England, on October 5, 1820. Her father was a professor of music and a descendant of Christopher Wren, the great architect of London, who built St. Paul's Cathedral and other noted buildings.

The Holmes' lost six children in infancy. Their son, Bart, was a horse buyer from Melvin. John W. operated an express line in Omaha, Nebraska, and William was an attorney in Effingham, Illinois. The daughter, Fannie, was the first white child to be born in Peach Orchard Township, on May 29, 1857.

John W. Holmes was the father of William C. Holmes, who was in business on Melvin's Main street for sixty years.

William B. Holmes was at one time supervisor of Peach Orchard Township, township assessor, township commissioner, school trustee, and served fourteen years as justice of the peace. He retired to Melvin in 1888, and died in 1897.



Seated left  
to right:

Wm. B. Holmes,  
Eliza Wren Holmes.

Back Row:

Bart Holmes,  
Wm. S. Holmes,  
John W. Holmes,  
and Fannie Ann  
Holmes Koestner.

## John S. Hunt . . .

John S. Hunt was born near Danville, Vermillion County, Illinois, on January 4, 1829. His parents, Cornelius and Jane Hunt, were moving from Muskingum County, Ohio, to Putnam County, Illinois, and stopped near Danville for a year to raise food to continue their journey.

He joined a party to go to the gold fields of California in 1849, and was gone three years. Upon his return in 1852, while living in LaSalle County, he married Jane Burley.

He came to Ford County in 1867, bought 900 acres of government land, and built the second house in the township, one-half mile north of the Melvin cemetery. Here they raised their family of eight children.

He and William Holmes named the township when it was formed on September 15, 1868. He was the

first tax collector, a school director, supervisor, gave land for the Melvin cemetery, and was one of the founders of the Methodist church.

He built a home on south Green street, and retired in 1882. He died on April 11, 1909.



John S. Hunt's home on South Green St. The Kenneth Gravlin family resides there now.

## The John S. Hunt Children

Back row: Julia Hunt Salters, William Hunt. Front row: Della Hunt McClure, Ruth Hunt Thompson, Nina Hunt Hoobler, Elizabeth Hunt McMahon, Dora Hunt Brown





### James Dixon . . .

James Dixon was born in Manchester, England, June 7, 1836. He came to America with his parents at the age of three years, and they settled in LaSalle County, Illinois.

He enlisted in the 17th Illinois Volunteers during the Civil War. Following the war, he operated a brick yard in Ottawa, Illinois. He married Jane Hunt in 1865. In 1867, they moved to Peach Orchard township, and he became the township's first supervisor. He died in 1904.



Hartmann Bros. Building was formerly a Drug Store in 1917.



This matched team of black percherons, named Bess and Beauty, were raised by the young James Dixon shown here on the left with his cousin, Edward Dixon, in 1897.

The hearse for funerals provided by Earnest Houk, undertaker of Roberts and Piper City, was drawn by these horses. Mr. Dixon kept these horses until they died of old age. Beauty's hide was then used to make the fur lap robe shown with the Dixon twins, pictured above.



Disk wheels dated a car in the 1920's.

### T. D. Thompson . . .

T. D. Thompson was born December 4, 1847, in Monroe County, Ohio. In 1864, the family moved to Rutland, Illinois, and in 1869, after his marriage to Eliza Hobbs, he came to Peach Orchard township. He built the first house in Melvin, and his son, Clyde, was the first child born in Melvin.

T. D. Thompson was postmaster, first station agent, had a general merchandise store, and took an active part in church, school, and community affairs.



Melvin Depot around 1912.

### George T. Arends . . .

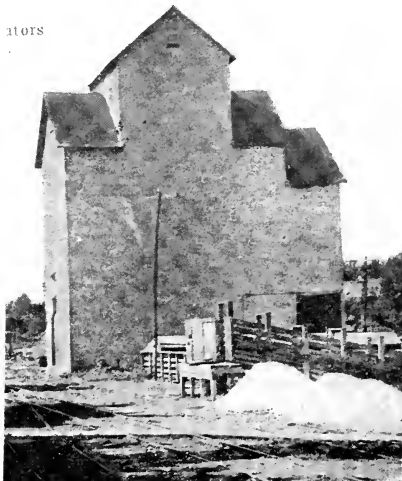
George T. Arends was born in Peoria, Illinois, on August 9, 1849. The family moved to Peach Orchard Township in 1870, and in 1874, he married Talea Weiss. He is the father of Congressman Leslie C. Arends, the only survivor of a family of nine children.

In 1872, Mr. Arends and his brother-in-law, John Iehl, became owners of the first grain elevator in Melvin. In 1890, they established the first bank, known as Iehl and Company. Mr. Iehl died in 1932, and Mr. Arends died in 1934.

### William Gash . . .

William Gash was born in England in 1837. In 1858, he came to America and lived in Grundy County, Illinois, until 1869, when he came to Ford County. He was road commissioner, township collector, township assessor, and served as justice of the peace for twenty years. His wife, the former Sarah Bevins, was mid-wife for the early settlers. No road was too muddy or too deep with snow to keep her from the bedside of a mother who needed her.

11075



This picture shows the stockyards east of the old elevator.



This page sponsored through the courtesy of

MEIER OIL SERVICE, INC, Melvin

MELVIN LUMBER YARD, Melvin



Back row, l. to r.: Margaret Carney, the Jones twins, Leota Worthington, Mr. Foreman, Orville Jones, Anna Abraham, Miller. 2nd row down: Mabel Harsch, Wm. Karnopp, Fannie Tansley, Andrew Arends, Margaret Jackson, Chas. Worthington, Bertha Hoobler, Jos. Karnopp, Mary Thackeray, Geo. Iehl. 3rd row down: Amke Groen, Alvin Mathis, Bess Holverson, Wesley Ashby, Maude Holmes, Jake Dixon, Josephine Perry, James Thackeray, Sylvia Hull, Chas. Gould. Front row: Bess Hoobler, Ray Salter, Gertrude Thompson, Lewis Fielding, Lydia Karnopp, Wm. Otto, Nellie Worthington, Don Miller, Bertha Gould. Jones.



Hamming it up - L. to R. Amandus Buchholz, Henry Spellmeyer, "Shorty" Larkin.



Harold Freehill's elevator office - 1940.

This page sponsored through the courtesy of

MRS. HAROLD FREEHILL

and

JOHN E. MALONEY, M. D.

# Melvin Garden Club

The purpose of the Melvin Garden Club is to learn about amateur gardening, to aid in protecting native trees, plants, birds, and soil, and to encourage civic planting. The first meeting of this organization was held at the home of Janie Shilts on May 9, 1930, when Katherine Mohr and Janie Shilts were elected president and vice president, respectively. Other officers were Sarah Guilbert, corresponding secretary, and Tena Williams, treasurer.

In 1931 the club organized a junior club which had thirty-three members. There were four groups: Kindergarten, four to six years; Sprouters, seven to eight years; Climbers, nine to eleven years; and Masters, thirteen to fifteen years. They planted gardens, held flower shows at which prizes were awarded, and discussed gardening.

One of the club's major projects was raising money for the public drinking fountain, which was installed in 1936 on the northwest corner of Main and Center streets. A flower show was held and many cakes and gallons of homemade ice cream were sold to help finance the purchase and installation of the fountain.

The club landscaped the Melvin Library grounds and placed several gardening books in the library. Members have planted many trees, shrubs, and flowers around the school buildings and at various places in the village. They have donated to projects such as the Permanent Home of the National Council of State Garden Clubs; the Volo and Wauconda Bog Fund, Evanston, Illinois; Lincoln Memorial Gardens, Springfield, Illinois; the Melvin United Fund; and other community projects.

Club members have toured the Myrtle Walgreen estate, Dixon, Illinois; Morion Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois; Lilacia Park, Lombard, Illinois, and Harold Stevens' rock garden in Paxton, Illinois. They have also attended several flower shows in Chicago.

The present officers are Ruth Reitz, president; Bethel Peters, vice-president; Wilma Miller, secretary-treasurer; Irene Thompson, publicity chairman, and Mabel Spellmeyer, sunshine chairman.



Flossie Mielke works with her flowers.



The first Garden Club meeting was held in the home of Janie Shilts, pictured above.

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This page sponsored through the courtesy of

GRAVLIN WELDING SERVICE, Melvin

ARLEN'S DRUG SHOP, Gibson City

JIM'S FOOD CENTER, Gibson City

COUNTRY COMPANIES, Agent, C. G. Miller, Melvin



Shown above is Main street looking west in 1914. In the center back ground is the old town pump. Ed Dietterle is engaged in tire repair at the left. Mr. Hess, drug store owner, and Miss Linna Hull, are sidewalk supervisors.



Above is a touring car parked in the driveway of an underground garage at the Henry Arends residence.



The freshmen class of 1920 is pictured at right. Back row, l. to r. - Earl Thackeray, Wes Arends, Alf Steinman, Everett Jones, Glen Spellmeyer, Guilford Ren, Vance Ross, John Powell.

Middle row - Francis Diskin, Dan Stahmer, Weldon Crawford, Herb Schlutz, Harold Thompson, John Thompson.

Front Row: Verneil Calison, Daisy Rowcliff, Berniece Folkers, Cletus Bond, Della Kenward, Evelyn Meyers, Marjorie Iehl, Fern Hunt.

The Melvin Concert Band in uniform is shown at the left.

Back: 1. to r. - G. Phillips, R. O. Spellmeyer, W. Beck, L. Arends, W. Boundy, and W. Mielke.

Middle: H. Mielke, A. Arends, F. Mielke, Harry Beck, Paul Bose, G. Arends.

Front: A. Ehmen, Sebo Ehmen, Walter Beck, Edward Beck, LeRoy Arends.



## "A CENTURY ON THE PRAIRIE"

Persons operating or residing on land purchased by their grandfathers one hundred years ago, making them "century farmers," include the following:

### **Ronald Buchholz**

His grandfather, A. Buchholz, purchased his land in 1867 and farmed until his retirement. Then his son, Frank, farmed the land until his death in 1954. Mr. Buchholz is the present operator.

### **Earl Thackeray**

His grandfather, John Thackeray, bought the land in 1867. He was succeeded by his son, J. Edward, and now Mr. Thackeray farms the land.

### **Charles Spellmeyer**

Mr. Spellmeyer is Melvin vicinity's oldest resident, having resided on the farm of his birth for almost ninety-nine years. His father, Henry Spellmeyer, settled there in 1868. Mr. Spellmeyer tells of the many snakes in the prairie grasses when the sod was being plowed. Farmers always had to carry clubs with them. He can remember snakes crawling through the cracks of the kitchen floor.

### **Pauline Arends Lippincott**

Mrs. Lippincott lives on the farm purchased by her grandfather, George O. Arends, in 1867. Her father, John Arends, farmed there until his death in 1911, and he was succeeded by her brother, Charles. Pauline and her husband, Obed Lippincott, have operated the land since their marriage.

### **Elizabeth Boundy**

Miss Boundy still lives on the place settled by her grandfather, William Boundy, in 1870. Then her father, Samuel Boundy, farmed it until his death.

### **Leland Netherton**

Mr. Netherton farms land settled by his grandfather, Henry Netherton, in 1868. Sam Netherton, a son, operated the land for two or three years in partnership with his brother, Arthur. Arthur continued to farm until his retirement in 1945, and was succeeded by his son, Leland.

### **Franklin Sharp**

His great grandfather, Edgar Sharp, came to Wall Township in 1858. The farm has been operated by Mr. Sharp for the past nineteen years.



Such a grand time was had by children and animals alike.

# Do You Remember?

Women wore: hoop skirts . . . . bustles . . . .  
sunbonnets . . . . leg-o-mutton sleeves . . . . camisoles  
. . . . gimps . . . . corsets with stays . . . . hat pins . .  
. . . . used curling irons . . . . wore "rats" in their hair . .  
. . . . went to the beauty shop for marcel . . . . filled hope  
chests . . . .

Men wore: button shoes . . . . spats . . . . suspenders  
. . . . garters . . . . Plus Fours . . . . stick pins . . . .  
. . . . celluloid collars . . . . red flannel underwear . . . .  
college "men" had raccoon coats

Kids wore: panty-waists . . . . long underwear  
tucked into long stockings . . . . asafetida bags all  
winter long

Those early cars: Model-T . . . . Essex . . . .  
Hupmobile . . . . acetylene lamps . . . . running boards  
. . . . rumble seats . . . . isinglass curtains . . . . cranks  
. . . . curtains and flower vases in sedans

School meant: McGuffey Readers . . . . box socials  
. . . . ink wells . . . . country school picnics . . . . county  
final exams for eighth graders . . . . freezing in the  
corner farthest from the stove and roasting near it . .  
. . . . spelling bees . . . . walking to and from . . . . slates  
. . . . pen wipers . . . . eight grades taught by one  
teacher

Melvin had: all dirt (mud) roads . . . . oil burning  
street lights which had to be lit each evening, turned  
out each morning . . . . three pumps for drinking  
water in town . . . . the town marshal walked all around  
town with a shovel cleaning mud off the crosswalks . .  
. . . . wooden slat sidewalks . . . . watering troughs and  
hitching posts . . . . dray wagon business to deliver  
coal and freight . . . . livery stables . . . . blacksmith  
shop . . . . harness maker . . . .

Homes had: coal or wood-burning stoves which  
meant ashes to be carried out . . . . outhouses . . . .  
sausage stuffers . . . . cold upstairs bedrooms . . . .  
crank telephones on the wall . . . . oven doors on which  
to warm feet . . . . washboards . . . . Victrolas . . . .  
pump organs (bellows operated either by player or  
friend) . . . . Daguerrotypes . . . . base burners . . . .  
put up each fall, taken down each spring . . . . carpet  
beaters and curtain or carpet stretchers . . . . cherry  
pitters . . . . sauerkraut jars . . . . home brew . . . .  
summer kitchens . . . . coffee grinders . . . . vegetable  
cellar . . . . wash boilers and sticks . . . . parlor used  
only for guests and closed off in winter . . . . canning  
(putting up) season . . . . feather ticks . . . . a cistern  
. . . . more than one use for Sears Roebuck catalogues  
. . . . antimacassars . . . .

Farming meant: kerosene lanterns . . . . stone,  
wood, or glass churns . . . . picking corn by hand and  
scooping it into cribs . . . . windmills . . . . fences—split  
rail, hedge, barbed wire . . . . walking plows . . . .  
threshing rings and oh, those dinners . . . . husking  
pegs . . . . lard kettles . . . . cider presses . . . . smoke  
houses . . . . priming pumps . . . . butchering . . . .

Stores had: spittoons . . . . dill pickle barrels . .  
. . . . pay-day treats . . . . penny candy . . . . soda cracker  
barrels . . . . pot-bellied stoves . . . . hitching racks or  
posts behind the store . . . . clerk with a cart who  
delivered groceries . . . .

Fun was: husking bees . . . . bob-sled parties and  
sleigh bells . . . . band concerts . . . . hay-rack rides . .  
. . . . Sunday School picnics in Shiels' timber . . . .  
Chautauquas . . . . Jessie Colton tent shows each  
summer . . . . balloon ascension each July 4th . . . .  
barn raisings . . . . quilting parties . . . . watching the  
first airplane fly from Chicago to Springfield following  
the railroad tracks . . . .



If You Can't Laugh, Don't Come to See the

# Womanless Wedding

To be Presented at the High School Auditorium by the  
Simpson Levie Company, of Bardstown, Ky.

**SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN LEGION AND RELIEF CORPS**

70

**LOCAL MEN AS CHARACTERS**

Screams of Laughter! Be Sure to Come!  
Biggest Affair Ever Staged in Melvin!

70

**An ALL STAR CAST headed by E. E. THOMPSON as Leading Lady**

Butler C. W. Haworth  
Punch Girls C. T. Wilson  
Harold Thompson  
Present Takers Roy Pickwiler  
H. Conger  
Bride's Weeping Mother, Les Arends  
Comforting Father Bill Holmes  
Bad Boys Ben Wright  
Ben Kaufman  
Ikey Rosenstein Pete Thompson  
Old Maid Aunt Glen Roland  
Bride's Grandfather, Henry Arends  
Bride's Grandfather, W. P. Kenward  
Charlie Choplin Marion Hodges  
Flick Uncle Mike Arends  
Hick Aunt W. E. Thompson  
Twins Jack Russell  
Art Netherlen  
Mary Pickford Gilbert Arends  
Groom's Haughty Mother,  
Clyde Wilson  
Groom's Haughty Father, A. B. Lundy  
Flapper Alf Ehmen  
Mr. Vanderbilt W. C. Iehl  
Mrs. Vanderbilt Henry Beck  
Sis Hopkins Wes. Arends  
Fashion Plate Coach Linquist  
Kentucky Colonel C. E. Allen  
His Lady Clarence Pickwiler  
Fritz Kreisler Harold Gedeelman  
Country Cousin Art Arends  
Al Smith Forest Thompson  
Mrs. Smith Ed Dieterle  
Henpecked Husband, H. Muehlenpfort  
Devoted Wife Frank Mikeworth



Harry Lauder Alf Arends  
Pat O'Grady I. F. Harshbarger  
Resie O'Grady Geo. Arends  
Annie Laurie G. H. Dueringer  
Mr. Hoover Dr. Colteaux  
Mrs. Hoover H. L. Ellis  
Pres. Coolidge Fred Howk  
Mrs. Coolidge Wm. Boundy  
Negro Mammy Supt. Keeler  
Baby Milton Strubbar  
Rastus Milton Smith  
Gen. Pershing Dr. Boshell  
Col. Lindbergh Jack Beck  
Theda Bara Art Kiener  
Galli Curei Bud Lippencott  
Mr. Ford W. H. Kayser  
Mrs. Ford Ike Thompson  
Irving Berlin Roy Arends  
Paderewski R. Spellmeyer  
Bishop H. J. Glabe  
Groomsmen—Henry Tjarks, George  
Boundy, H. Dickman, James Long,  
Ralph Thackeray, A. J. Campbell,  
Wm. Sathers, Jack Drilling.  
Bestman Art Nelson  
Bridesmaids—Boots Yachon, Remus  
Curtis, John Iehl, Virgil Jansson.  
Flower Girls Dave Bier  
John Kenward  
Train Bearer Arnold Kempf  
Ring Bearer George Ensign  
Page Herman Muehlenpfort  
Bride E. E. Thompson  
Groom Guess Who

## Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 2-3

Show Starts at 8:30 P. M. Tickets Reserved Saturday, 4:00 o'clock P. M., at W. C. Holmes' Store  
WARNING—This particular play was composed, is owned and produced by Simpson Levie Company, protected by Copyright No.  
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fullest extent and damages collected.



# Will You Remember 1971 When . . .

Women and girls wore: maxis . . . minis . . . hot pants . . . panty hose . . . pantsuits . . . knee-high boots . . . wigs . . .

Men and boys wore: bell-bottoms . . . ruffled shirts . . . MOD fashions . . . side-burns (again) . . . shoulder-length hair . . .

Youth liked: psychedelic posters . . . black lights . . . dune buggies . . . doing wheelies . . . Hon-das . . . Saturday morning TV cartoons . . . pizza . . .

School meant: Reading the "Godfather" . . . club parties . . . hard desks . . . prom . . . semesters exam . . . class rings . . . boil in one room . . . freeze in another . . . a different teacher for every subject . . . essays . . . driving to and from . . . heavy notebooks . . . trying to keep off the graffiti wall . . . trying to get on the honor roll . . . a pass for every place . . . student council . . . no dress code . . .

Farming meant: price supper programs . . . diverted acreage . . . air-conditioned cabs and AM-FM radios on tractors . . . abandoned farmsteads as farm acreages increase . . . plateless corn planters . . . Southern corn blight . . . Homes had: central heat-and-air-conditioning units . . . world-wide direct dialing . . . Polaroid cameras . . . freeze-dried coffee . . . artificial foods from sweeteners to orange juice to bacon bits . . . wall-to-wall carpeting throughout the house . . . central vacuum-cleaning systems . . . infrared ovens . . . frozen TV dinners . . . disposable diapers . . . garbage disposers . . .

Entertainment media developed: nudity on stage and in films . . . tape players in cars . . . stereo . . . color TV . . .

National concerns were: bomb threats . . . computer take-over . . . Viet Nam (still) . . . war protest marches . . . large-scale drug abuse . . . air and water pollution . . .

National controversies were: legalized abortion . . . the eighteen-year old vote . . . Lt. Calley trial . . . forced busing to effect school integration . . .

Innovations of the day were: enclosed temperature-controlled shopping malls . . . 8c postage for first-class

mail . . . LUV . . . astronauts' moon walk . . .

Often-heard words and phrases were: hippies . . . yippies . . . and flower children . . . do-it-yourself projects . . . sonic boom . . . Dear Abby . . . medicare . . . generation gap . . . population explosion . . . Women's Lib . . . Black Panthers . . . unisex . . . rock music festivals . . . ecumenical movements in churches . . .

## Reproduced below is a typical obituary of 1918

### Death of Popular Young Lady

Miss Gladys Thompson, of this city, was stricken with influenza last Friday while performing her duties as teacher in the public schools of Gibson City. She came home in the evening. Medical aid was summoned but there seemed to be no immediate cause for alarm. She became seriously ill during the night and pneumonia developed. She grew steadily worse until death relieved her of her suffering early Monday morning.

Miss Thompson was born in Melvin, received her education in and was graduated from our public and high school, and for one so young had made exceptionally good success as a teacher in the schools of the county. She was a beautiful character and had a bright future before her, and it seems too bad that she must be taken away.

**OBITUARY**  
Gladys Irvine, daughter of W. W. and Mrs. May Thompson, was born in Melvin, Ill., April 29, 1896, and passed away after a short illness of influenza followed by pneumonia at her home in Melvin on the early morning of December 10, 1918, aged 22 years, 7 months and 10 days. "Glad" as she was familiarly called has gone from us, but we feel she still lives among us in the precious memories and influences, which like the rose when it is plucked and taken away, leave their fragrance behind.

In his moralillage God cultivates many flowers for their exquisite moral beauty and fragrance. When bathed in soft sunshine they have burst into blossom, then the Divine hand gathers them from the gardens of earth to be kept in crystal vases in the deathless mansions above. Verily to the eye of faith nothing is fairer than the death of such a splendid girl. Slight and sense indeed recoil from it. The flower that filled heart and home and community with exquisite delight, we are stricken with sore anguish to find its stem broken and the blossoms with all its promised fruitage gone. But the earthly ministry of Miss Gladys

was well done for the rose does its work as grandly in its blossom as the vine with its fruit. Having helped to sanctify and lift heavenward the very hearts that broke at her farewell, she has gone from this troubled sphere leaving the world the blessed and the skies through which she passed with lingering fragrance. This dear girl professed faith in Christ and united with the First Congregational church of Melvin at the close of the Spooner meetings during the pastorate of Rev. Leonard, and continued an attendant and faithful churchman during the rest of her short life.

She followed the profession of teaching in the public schools of Ford county, and won golden opinions where ever her services were secured. Her pupils were always enamored of her work, a condition precedent to successful effort in any task. Those high in educational authority declare her to have been efficient in a superlative degree.

Gladys leaves to mourn her early going away her mother, one sister, Mrs. Albert Trimmer, five brothers, Lloyd, of Clintonville, Wis.; Lyle, Claire, Wayne and Harold, of this place. There is nothing more beautiful than love and confidence at home, and those who lived with, and knew Gladys best unite in saying that she was possessed of a beautiful spirit, and no one can speak too highly of her as a daughter, sister, friend.

This dear girl will be sadly missed in her home, in the church, and in the community. The universal heart of Melvin and neighborhood go out in sincerest sympathy with this grief stricken family, and all may well say with an inspired writer: "The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto the living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The funeral services were held from the family residence Tuesday afternoon, Rev. L. F. Culom, of the English M. E. Church officiating. The remains were tenderly laid to rest in the Melvin cemetery.

# Business Guarantors of Centennial Booklet

Ace Hardware Inc. Gibson City	John and Viola Clark Melvin	Double B Barn Anchor
Anchor Grain Company Anchor	Glenn Clauss Melvin	J. C. Ebach Realty Fairbury
Baltz Sales & Service Chatsworth	Colfax Block & Septic Tank Co. Colfax	Chuck Elliott Insurance & Real Estate Chatsworth
Arthur Benz, Attorney at Law Gibson City	Colonial Cleaners Gibson City	Fairbury Ready Mix Fairbury
B. & H. Construction Mid-Way Sibley	Conibear's Drug Store Chatsworth	Russell and Pat Fairley Melvin
Bingo's Tavern Strawn	Cornbelt Hatchery of Ill., Inc. Gibson City	Lloyd A. Falck Paint Spraying Melvin
Bob's Barber Shop Melvin	Cornies Shoe Store Gibson City	Firestone Dealer Store Paxton
John Bradshaw & Son Buckley	Mary Cothorn Gibson City	First National Bank Gilman
Onarga	Culkin Hardware Chatsworth	Ford-Baier Funeral Home Paxton
Charles Brucker Sibley	Dameron Plumbing & Heating Fairbury	Ford County H.I.A. Melvin
Vern Brucker Garage Sibley	Daves Super Market, Inc. Fairbury	Ford County Press Melvin
Buckley State Bank Buckley	Dave's Tire and Alignment Chatsworth	Forrest Redi-Mix Forrest
Jane Burns Dance Studio Gibson City	Decker's Livestock, Inc. Gibson City	Dr. Mark R. Foutch Paxton
Butch's Barber Shop Sibley	Dietterle's Grocery Roberts	Friendly Flower Shop Gibson City
Cendar Gas Company Fairbury	Dix Mutual Country Fire Insurance Paxton	Froidcoeur Apartments Melvin
Emery Cender Gibson City	Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Donovan Melvin	Gibson Bowl Gibson City
Costello's Town and Country Market Chatsworth	D. and R. Drugs Paxton	Gibson City I.G.A. Gibson City

# Business Guarantors of Centennial Booklet

Gibson Plumbing & Heating Gibson City	Kaiser Ag. Chemicals, R. Wilson, Mgr. Chatsworth	Liberty Lawnmower & Snow Equip. Sales Chicago
Gilman Sales & Co., Engravers Champaign	Kaufman Antiques Loda	Luhrsen Income Tax Service Buckley
G. & W. Supermarket Gibson City	Bruce Kiener Melvin	Marcy's House of Beauty Loda
Haberkorn Furniture & Upholstery Chatsworth	Mr. and Mrs. Glen F. Kietzman & Cindy Loda	Mardella's Shoe Store Melvin
Dr. James Hartford Gibson City	R. O. Kietzman, Pioneer Seed Corn Melvin	Marion's Barber Shop Roberts
Hatton's Cafe Melvin	Kline & Meyer Veterinarians Gibson City	Martenson & Martenson, Att. at Law Paxton
Robert and Ann Hays Melvin	W. D. "Bud" Kreitzer and Son Elliott	Mauer & Roth, Inc. Fairbury
Herges Package Store Paxton	Kuester Appliances & T. V. Buckley	Mel's Market Melvin
H. and H. Tap Gibson City	Kuepferschmid Refrigeration Forrest	Bud Meyer, Custom Harvesting Sibley
Hilltop Drive Inn Chatsworth	Don Lange Sanitary System Melvin	Middleton & Middleton, Att. at Law Gibson City
Honegger Farms Co., Inc. Forrest	Truman and Judy Langley Melvin	W. D. Miller & Son Piper City
Hoover Jewelers Gibson City	Larry's Maytag Store Chatsworth	Montgomery Ward Catalog Sales Gibson City
H. and R. Block Paxton	P. Larson & Company Paxton	Warren J. Nally, Texaco Products Gibson City
Huber's Clothing Fairbury	Leather's Supermarket Sibley	Neva's Beauty Shop Sibley
Hudson Drug Shop Paxton	L. John Lee Insurance Paxton	Noble Seed Company Gibson City
Hunt Insurance Agency Gibson City	Leenerman Shell Service Sibley	Northern Illinois Gas Co. Aurora
		Elie Nuss Farm Supply Paxton

# Business Guarantors of Centennial Booklet

Olson's Cafe Roberts	Sandwich Shop Gibson City	Steidinger Inc. Tires Fairbury
O'Neal and Batson Gibson City	Sears Catalog Merchants Chatsworth	Leonard A. Stiegman Roberts
Orr Realty & Insurance Paxton	Laurence Seng Garage Roberts	L. F. Swanson & Son Well Drilling Contractors Gibson City
Ben Overstreet & Son Paxton	Shaner Implements Co., Inc., Gibson City	Swanstrom Radio & T.V. Buckley
Pacey, Pacey and Ashmore Paxton	Shell Oil Co., Inc. Sibley	James H. Taylor, Building Contractor Gibson City
Paxton Flower Shop Paxton	Shephard Flower Shop Gilman	Thackeray Ins. Agcy. Melvin
L. F. Peterson Co. Paxton	Schockey's Dept. Store Gibson City	Howard Thomas Gravel Co. Paxton
Protein Plus Laboratories Colfax	Sibley Alexander Lumber Co. Sibley	Tim's Shell Service Chatsworth
Louis Razzano P. G. A. Pro., Lakeview Country Club Loda	Sibley Co-op Locker Service Co. Sibley	Tjarks Electric Service Sibley
Rebholz Electric Chatsworth	Sibley Complete Feed & Grain Service Sibley	Tranor Grain & Forrest Elevator Forrest
Reynolds Shoes Gibson City	Sibley Sportsman's Club Sibley	Jim Trunk, Auctioneer Chatsworth
Rhode Motors Piper City	Sibley Triangle Mobil Gas Station Sibley	Village of Sibley Fred Meyer, Mayor
Roberts "66" Service Chatsworth	Simmon's Marathon Service Sibley	V. & R. Home Appliances Roberts
Robinson Hardware Paxton	Sohigo Service Co. Anchor	Walter's Ford Sales & Service Chatsworth
Roses Star Market Paxton	Soran's Cafe Piper City	Western Auto Associate Store Paxton
Ken Rost Ford Inc. Gibson City	Star Cleaners Gibson City	Weaver, Niewold & Hasselbring Paxton
Couye R. Sadler Melvin	Speers Shoe Repair Gibson City	Zimmerman Hardware & Furniture Fairbury

# Guarantors of Melvin Centennial

Mr. & Mrs. Everett Abrahamson	Cender Gas Co., Inc.	Mrs. Dorothy Eminger
Ace Hardware Inc.	Central Illinois Public Service Co.	Lyle Evans
Mr. & Mrs. Don Allen	Central Production Credit Assn. - Melvin Office	Evergreen Cafe
Lloyd D. Allen	Jerry & Mary Cielinski	Lloyd Falck
American Legion Post, No. 642	John & Viola Clark	Fashion Shop
Arends Bros., Inc., Melvin	Glenn Clauss	Mr. & Mrs. Henry Ficken
Mr. & Mrs. David Arends	Edw. W. Clore	Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Fields
George J. Arends	Ruth Clubb	Ford Co. Boots & Saddle Club
Gilbert Arends	Weldon Conger	Ford County Farm Bureau
Iva Arends	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Coomer	Ford County F. S. Inc.
Karl D. Arends	Mr. & Mrs. Harold Copass	Ford County Press
Leslie C. Arends	Inez Copass	Ford Grain Co., Inc.
LeRoy Arends	Cornie's Shoe Store	Mr. & Mrs. Harry Forster
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Arends	Millard & Doris Cox	Mr. & Mrs. Pat Fosnaugh
Roger Arends	John Craft	Fred's TV
Arends & Sons, Inc., Gibson City	Bernadine Crawford	Jean Freehill
Arlen's Drug Shop	Dan Curtis	Mike & Joyce Freehill
Mr. and Mrs. James Arnold	Patty Curtis	Friendly Flower Shop
Chester Ayers	Remus Curtis	Dean Froidcoeur
Bob's Barber Shop	Richard Curtis	Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Frye
Geo. C. Bauer	Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Curtis	Dr. Wm. A. Garrett
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Beacher	H. S. Dale	Gibson City Clinic, S. C.
Oscar Benson	Danforth Funeral Home	Gibson City First National Bank
Arthur Benz	Clyde I. Day	Gibson Federal Savings
Mrs. Elva Benz	Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Decker	Gibson Manor Nursing Care
Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Bitner	Harry K. Deffley	Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Goodmonson
Marian J. Boog	Raymond DeFries	Carla Gravlin
Delmar Boundy	Armando L. deMola, M. D.	Cheryl Gravlin
Gary L. Boundy	Earl & Laura DeWall	Janet Gravlin
Grace Boundy	Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Dietterle	Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Gravlin
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Boundy	Drew Dixon	Jane Gudenrath
Larry A. Boundy	Leanne Dixon	Charles Harshbarger
Robert Boundy	Millard Dixon	Hartmann Bros.
Ronald & Doris Boundy	George & Ida Dodd	Victoria Hartman
Terri L. Boundy	Edna Dueringer	M. L. Hasenauer, Postmaster
Wm. Browning	Lowell Dueringer	Hatton's Cafe
Ormond Brownlee	Thomas E. Duffy	Rev. & Mrs. Harold Heintzig
Lois Brucker	Maurice Dunahee	C. W. Hicks, Inc.
E. C. Bucher, M. D.	Eastern Illinois Power Cooperative	Mrs. Harold Hicks
Ronald Buchholz	Mr. & Mrs. Delmar Ehmen	Dale Hillary
Donna Busick	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Ellis	Daniel R. Hornickel
Janet Busick		
Emerson Busick		
Steve Busick		

# Guarantors of Melvin Centennial

Lorinda A. Hornickel  
 Richard A. Hornickel  
 Robert J. & Velma Hornickel  
 Bertha Howk  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Hummell  
 Emma Huppert  
 J. D. Hutchcraft  
 Jake & Kates  
 Jones Motor Sales  
 Mr. and Mrs. Walter Kayser  
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 M. I. Kendrick  
 Ted L. Kendrick  
 W. E. Kerchenfaut  
 Mr. & Mrs. Glen Kietzman & Cindy  
 Robert Kietzman  
 Kline & Meyer  
 Kramer Publishing Co.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Earl Kresin  
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 Shelly & Tracy Long  
 Loy's Store  
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 Mrs. Leslie Markwalder  
 F. M. McGrath Imp.  
 Meier Oil Service Inc.  
 Melvin Chapter No. 537 O.E.S.  
 Melvin Custom Farm Service  
 Melvin Feed Mill  
 Melvin Fire Department  
 Melvin Ladies Aux. VFW Post 6334  
 Melvin Lodge No. 811 AF & AM  
 Melvin Lumber Yard  
 Melvin State Bank  
 Melvin Tap  
 Melvin VFW Post 6334

Melvin Woman's Club  
 Melvin United Methodist Church  
 Melvin St. Peter's Evangelical  
 Lutheran Church  
 C. Glen Miller  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ed Milligan  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Milligan  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Moody  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Morgan  
 Kenneth Muehlenpfort  
 O. E. Meyers  
 Mr. & Mrs. Leland Netherton  
 Mr. & Mrs. Sam Netherton  
 J. H. Neuschwander  
 Noble Bros. Seeds  
 Northern Illinois Gas  
 J. O. Oltmans  
 Paxton First National Bank  
 Pekin Farmers Ins. Co.  
 John & Ruth Pool  
 Mrs. Alma Reitz  
 Emma Rexroat  
 Ray Richardson  
 Roberts Alexander Lumber  
 Roberts State Bank  
 Chas. Roth  
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 Pearl Schultz  
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 Mr. and Mrs. Bardell Shelton  
 Deborah Shives  
 Irene L. Shives  
 James O. Shives  
 Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Shives  
 Shives Trucking  
 Wm. Shives

Sibley Complete Feed & Grain  
 Service  
 Sibley Triangle  
 Dick Siders  
 St. George Catholic Church  
 Kenneth Stanford  
 Hazel Stathers  
 Deb Steinman  
 James & Carol Steinman  
 Marilyn Steinman  
 Ray Steinman  
 Ruth Steinman  
 Steve Steinman  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Stilwell  
 Strawn Arco Farm Center  
 Mr. & Mrs. Harry Strelluf  
 Sturm's Drug Store  
 Superior Cleaners  
 C. S. Swanick  
 Francis Swearingen  
 Mrs. Aldene E. Thackeray  
 Richie Thackeray  
 Susie Thackeray  
 Wendell Thackeray  
 Alberta P. Thieben  
 Dayo & Joy Thompson  
 C. J. Trimble  
 Dale Trimble  
 Clarence Underwood  
 Evelyn Underwood  
 Raleigh J. & Ella J. Underwood  
 Wm. C. Walker  
 Mr. & Mrs. Francis Walle  
 Mr. & Mrs. Martin Watterson  
 Carl Weber  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chas. Weber  
 Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Wichmann  
 Delmar Wiegel  
 Clyde E. Wilson, Jr.  
 Clyde E. Wilson, Sr.  
 Les Wilson  
 Windmill Antiques  
 E. W. Wurzbarger



Prof. Foreman's high school graduating class of 1899 is pictured above. The beautiful gowns, the large corsages, and the flowers and diplomas in the foreground were typical of class pictures at the turn of the century. Back row: l. to r. - Mae Bullington, Sylvia Hull Charles Roland, Mrs. Foreman, Ed Weber, Fannie Phillips, Stella Shilts. Front row: Zella Thompson, Bertha Gould, Prof. Foreman, Nettie Dixon, Etta Thompson.



Primary grades in 1905 pose with their teacher, Sadie Worthington. Back row: l. to r. Anna Larsen, Mary Fickwiler, Edna Short, George Short, Earl Kenney. Middle row - Fred Wheeler, Harry Kruschke, Marjorie Holverson, Margie McKinney, Lloyd Thompson, Roy Worthington, Edna Johnson. Bottom row - Marjorie Van Vockenburg, Bart Holverson Grace Wolf, Walter Colteaux, Maggie Bolley, Harry Woodward, Crystal Buchholz, "Skip-py Rudolph, Vernon Woodward, Pfiffer.



Fashion Belles from left to right: Back row: Lizzie Matthews, Belle McKenna, Minnie Reehl, Zora DeFries. Front row, Matt Miller and Annie Meyers.

## 1880 Peach Orchard Township Census

Ashley	Bevens	Boudy	Bothwell	Beck	Crawford	Drager	Friddle
Robert	James	William H	William H	Gotlieb	John	August	John
Margaret	Barco	Polina	Lettie E	Brandenburg	Elizabeth	Michael	
Harry	Edward	Charles	Frank	Henry	James A	Martin	Forney
Ahrends	Buchholtz	Bondy	Bond	Fanny	Patrick	Gotleib	George
George	Frederic	William	John	Earnest	Michael	Minnie	Elizabeth
Fanny	Joanna	Elizabeth	Ellen	Loren	Thomas		Melvin
Onno	August	Samuel	Fanny	Claud	Mary J	Defrieze	Mabel
Henry	Brady	Anna	Bristle	Wallis	Cholank	Onn	Maud
Denie	Patrick	Bertrams	Michael	Evva	Joseph	Mary	Nellie
Theodore	Bridget	John	Beard	Briestle	Carmichael	Ella	Fulcher
John	Barnabas	Joanna	John	Frank	Anna	George	Anderson
George	Catharine	Denie S	Ida	Cooper	Marietta	Heiko	Amanda
Michael	Edward		Cora	Alfred	Amanda	Beino	
Johanna	Mary	Brown	Charles		Anna	Dickensen	Freelove
Ahrends	Anna	John	Jesse	Crawford	Lydia	James	Chancy
Teis	Bertels	Elizabeth	John	James	Charles	Dixon	J J
Mary	Henry	James	Maude	Mary		James	Elizabeth
Abbott	Mary	Anna	Otis	John	Carroll	Jane	Charles
G S	Frank	William	Bookwalter	Mary E	J D	Mary	Steven
Mary	William	Elizabeth	Jessie	Thomas	Pebe	Cornelius	Minnie
W D	Emma	Thomas	Claud	James	Frederick	James	Joseph
G S	Edward	Bretting	Buchholtz	Elizabeth	Sarah	Laura	Eleanor
E R	Bickel	Frederick	August	Catherine	Campbell	Adda	
Ahrends	Samuel	Christina	Caroline	Nora	Joseph	Grace	Fristo
George	Charles	Minnie	Albert	Carpenter	Mary		I N
Telea	William		William	Margaret	Sarah	Diddens	S W
Teda	Frank	Buchholtz	Amandus		W B	John	Agnes
Andrew	Astor	Daniel	Emma	Cooper	Hillery	Mary	S B
Boudy	Beck	Irene	Buchholtz	William	Laurance	Dawson	J T
John	Gottlieb	Bully	Frank	Elizabeth	Cormiff	C E	Henry
Jane	Christina	Alfred	Laura	William	Peter	Ellis	Elizabeth
Mary J		Beck	Mabel	Jennie A	Harriett	Thomas	Freese
Charles	William	Frederick	Busick	Mary E	Harriett	Sarah	D J
Susan	Henry	Matilda	Nelson	Watson J	Fanny	Charles	Etta
George	Louis	Emma	Maria	James E	Minnie	Esther	Senie
Louis	Julia	Frederick	Erlton	Eveline S	Colvin	Royal	Lenie
	Albert	Alvina	Flora	Cora A	Baby	Baby	Katie

Collins	Eisman
Edward	Simeon
Martha	English
George	James
Defrieze	Fletcher
Gerard	Thomas
Amka	Elizabeth
Denie	Anna
Herman	Sarah
John	Mary
Christina	Lillie
George	Foster
Barbarah	William
Heline	Sarah G
Sieka	George
Dunn	Henry
Sarah	Mary
William	Charles
Dixon	George
George	Fench
Elizabeth	Henry
Anna	Helena
Martha	Johanna
Jennie	Fanny
Edward	Jane
Alice	Fanchin
Nellie	





The dashing Johnson brothers from left to right: Will, Herman, Theodore, and George.

## 1880 Peach Orchard Township Census

Graves	Gould	Helman	Bertha	Heath	Johnson	Kieback	McNabney
Lafayette	A P	August	Jacob	L S	John	John	George
Francis	Margaret	Mary	Henry	Mary J	Fanny	Kilgore	Anna
Frank	Charles	George	Letta	Harry	Jacob	J D	Emma
William	Hunt	Henry	Hinds	Lizzie	John	Margaret	Arthur
Nelson	John S	Frederick	William	Hore	Seba	James	Myer
Cora	Jane	Lydia	Ellen	Jacob W	Anna	Lillie	Peter
Nellie	James W	Mary	William	E C	George	Cora	Alfred J
Goggins	Orill D	John	Hannah	Holmes	Toda	T A	McLain
Patrick	Dora M	Harriett	Elizabeth	Bart	Baby	Klinebell	John
Catharine	John M	Matilda	Calvin	Hannah	Jennett	Coscie	McIntire
John	Hill	Higgins	Ellen	Jennie	Patrick	Luger	Lucy
Galager	Thomas	Michael	Hunt	William	Orill D	John	McMahon
George	Elizabeth	Hoobler	Philip E	Corie	Albert	Johanna	Joseph
Mary	John	Paul	Alice	Henry	Walter	Fanny	Elizabeth
Charles	William	Nina B	Murry	Beatrice	Koestner	William	Harry
Elizabeth	James	Blanche	Frank	John W	Paul	Denie	James
John	Herbert	Bertha	Gertrude	Innm	Karney	Lackey	Edna E
Mary	Florence	Hinds	William	Michael	Michael	James	Frank A
Belle	Richard	Robert	Ellen	Tina	Mary	Margaret	John H
Gasket	William	Anna C	Anna B	Tina	Ella	Denie	Estelle
Charles	Elizabeth	Hinds	Clyde	Emma	Knott	James W	McLaughlin
William	Fanny A	Perry	E S	lehl	George	Elizabeth	Thomas
Charles	Mary	Mary H	Mary	John	Kingsley	Lackey	Lucinda
Mary	Hanson	Robert	Mary	Mary	Minerva	John	William
Gash	Harriett	Edward	Humfrey	Johanna	Karsten	David	Anna
William	Henry	Cordelia	William	Baby	John	Lambourn	Meyer
Sarah	Hans	Holverson	George	Jenson	Sophia	Benjamin	Paul
William	Hunt	Henry	Harper	James	Mary	Miller	Andrew
Elizabeth	Anna E	Ellen	Gertrude	Caroline	Charles	Louis	Ruth
Anna	Henne	Kunde	Caroline	Denie	Anna	Etta	Rosa
	William			Mary	Emma	Anna	Jacob
						Emma	Harry
						John	John
						Adolph	McTernan
						William	Barnett
						Louisa	Ellen
						Nellie	Mary
						Matilda	Katie
						Emma	Alice
						McLain	Simon
						Thomas	Mary
						Mary	Harry
						Katie	Mathis
						Lloyd	Jeremiah
						James	Ellen
						Margaret	James
						Edward	Mary
						Frank	Margaret
						Thomas	John
						Owen	Mary
						Anthony	James
						Miller	Marsh
						Ebbo	Jesse
						More	Sarah
						Nicholas	Laura
						Onno	Edward
						Henry	Ida
						Frederick	Sarah
						Mary	Cora



The Bickel sisters clockwise from left: Iva, Hannah, Elizabeth and Emma.

## 1880 Peach Orchard Township Census

Otto	Rock	Roland	Stevens	Staling	Thackeray	Warner
Michael	William	William	Albert	Henry	George	John
Ida	Kate	Amanda	Sarah	Mary	Martha	Elizabeth
Mary	Margaret	Laurence	Lizzie		John W	Seth
Ida	George	Minnie	Francis	Thompson	Amos	
Minnie	John	Herbert	Etta	David	Mary	Wilson
John	Richards	Nora	Sosia	Delia	James	John J
Anna	Jesse	Emma	John	Charles		Jennie
Gustav					George	Mary
Peterson	Rowcliff	Sexton	Spellmeyer	Christopher	Timmons	John G
Hans	Henry	John	Henry	Ella	Mary	
Popkin	Sarah	Mary	Louisa	Theodore	Thomas	Wolff
Henry	Frank	Scholtie	Henry	Knude	Elizabeth	Margaret
Pierce	John	Herman	Mary	Reno M	Calmont	Joseph
Lucy	Albert	Amelia	Charles	Dora	Clyde	
Phillips	Ella	Amelia	Minnie		B Raph	Wit
Alfred	Cora	Sophia	Lena	Christopher	Cestie	Frederick
Sarah J	Lottie		Stiepleton	Reno	John M	Emma
George S	Arthur	Saienga	Nicholas	Henry	Jane	Edward
Miriam	Elizabeth	Adda	Matilda		Edward	Baby
George		Brun	Otto	Thompson	Franc	
Pease	Robi	Heska	Smith	Joseph	Wilsoncroft	John
Joseph	Joseph	Jacob	Susan	Worner	John	Hannah
Phillips	Riley	John	Robert	Thompson	Lafayette	
Louis	Philip	Schnelle	James	David	Jane	Worsing
Ellen J	Elizabeth	Henry G	Stathers		John	Samuel
Perry	Anna	Anna	Henry	Thompson	Mary	
E B	John	Charles	Margaret	John	Fanny	Warner
Elizabeth	Hugh	Matilda	William	Thackeray	William	George
Benjamin	Emma	Ida	Smith	John	Martha	Mary
James	Nellie	Baby	William	Catharine	George	David
					George	Fanny
					Thompson	Yarborough
					W H	Alex
					Ruth	
					UKena	Gotlieb
					Cornelius	Fanny
					John	Martha
					George	David
						Fanny
					Umbarger	
					Josiah	Zable
					Jane	Gotlieb
					Adah	Fanny
					Hattie	Gotlieb
					Almon	William
					Jessie	Gustf
					Jennie	Minnie
					Joseph	Julia
						Albert
					Underwood	
					William	
					Mary	
					Rosa	
					Thomas	
					John	
					Joanna	
					Mary	
					Elizabeth	
					Agnus	
					Robert	
					William	
					Mary	
					William	
					Theodore	
					Jane	



Village Board of Trustees, 1971.

Back row, l. to r.: Merle Drager; James Arnold, clerk; Albert Reitz; Kenneth Gravlin, president of the board. Front row, l. to r.: Richard Arends; James Shives; E. W. "Chuck" Wurzburger; Millard Dixon.

## Business Firms In Melvin, 1971

Aid Association for Lutherans, Rodgers Loos, agent  
Allen Garage, Don Allen, prop.

Arends Bros. Inc., John Deere Sales & Service

Bob Arnold, barber

Willis Beck, trucking

Champaign Production Credit Assoc.

Chayer Laundromat, Erwin Chayer, prop.

Clark's Barber Shop, John Clark, prop.

Glen Clauss, contractor

Country Companies Insurance, G. Miller, agent

Custom Farm Services, Inc., J. Steinman, mgr.

Merle Drager, lawnmower services

Dueringer Crop-Savor, Erwin and Lowell Dueringer

Dueringer Crop-Savor, Erwin and Lowell Dueringer

Tom Duffy, roofing and insulation

Evergreen Cafe, Corrine Rudolph, prop.

Factory Outlet Shoe Store, M. Hightower, prop.

Clarence Pickwiler, carpenter

Ford County Cooperative Extension Service

Ford County F.S. Company

Ford County Press, T. D. Thackeray, ed.

Ford Grain Company, R. Chandler, mgr.

Fred's T.V. Service, Fred Thackeray, prop.

Kenneth Gravlin, welding

H.I.A. office (Blue Cross)

Hartmann Bros. Inc., Carl Hartmann, prop.

Hatton's Cafe, Annabelle Hatton, prop.

Robert Hays, painter

Judy's Beauty Shop, Judy Langley, prop.

John Kemmer, shelling

Frances Kenward's Antique Shop

Bruce Kiener, painter

Don Lange, disposal service

Robert Latham, trucking

Lois's Beauty Shop, Lois Brucker, prop.

Meier Oil Service, W. Bakel and C. Bitner, props.

Mel's Market, Mel Steffen, prop.

Melvin Car Wash

Melvin Feed Mill, H. Arnold, prop.

Melvin Lumber Yard, J. Zander, prop.

Melvin Pool Hall, Inc.

Melvin State Bank, Inc.

Melvin Tap Room

Ernest Shives, trucking

James Shives, Trucking

Soil Conservation Service

Thackeray Insurance Agency, Wendell Thackeray, agent

Elmer Wichmann garage

Windmill Antiques, Mrs. Arnold Brucker, prop.



Sophomores of MCHS in 1926 were, back row, l. to r. - Bloice Shilts, Lowell Dueringer, Otis Keeler - Supt., John Iehl, Henry Steinman. Second row from back - Ruth Boundy, Mildred Oberly, Ruth Hubbard - teacher, Harold Conger, Loren Brucker, Mahlon Dixon. Third row from back - Hazel Milligan, , Goldie Jones, Art Kiener, Emile Becker, Walter Weber. Front row - Eunice Ren, Florence Arends, Dorothy Ackert, Evelyn Parrett, Annadel Reitz, Dwayne Schroen, Clayton Thackeray, Millard Dixon, Howard Ren.



In their graduation finery the members of the high school graduating class of 1905 are pictured above. Standing in back are: Emil Ehmen, Edwin Iehl, Prof. H. M. Rudolph, Dena Onken, and Fred Arends. Seated in front are: Emily Gedelman, Ethel McManee, Lulu Bunn, Clara Arends.

## Acknowledgments To Publication Staff

For the complete history of the Melvin area, the community is greatly indebted to the researches of Miss Adelaide Dixon, who spent many hours searching ancient records and interviewing the "Golden Agers." As Melvin's Premier Archivist, her work has been invaluable.

Co-editors of all written material in this book were Mrs. E. J. Freehill and Mrs. Leland Netherton, both of whom spent weeks preparing the copy for the printer. Page designers were Mrs. Dayo Thompson and Mrs. Emerald Wurzbarger.

The following Melvin area citizens deserve special recognition for their contributions to this publication. Each has exerted time, money, and individual skills toward the gathering of the various histories, sponsorships, and pictures. Their contribution will be remembered throughout the years. These include Mr. George Arends, Miss Hannah Arends (deceased), Mrs. LeRoy Arends, Mrs. Melvin Beacher, Mr. Delmar Boundy, Mrs. Grace Boundy, Mrs. Harold Boundy, Mr. John Clark, and Mr. Edward Clore.

Also contributing were Miss Bernadine Crawford, Mrs. William Curtis, Miss Adelaide Dixon, Mr. Millard Dixon, Mr. John Donovan, Mrs. John Donovan, Mrs. Gilbert Dueringer, Mr. Lloyd Falck, Jr., Mrs. Henry Ficken, Mr. Pat Fosnough, Mr. Claude Freehill, Mrs. Edward Freehill, Mrs. Jane Gudenrath, Mrs. J. R.

Heien, Mr. G. D. Lackey, Mr. O. E. Lippincott, and Mrs. O. E. Lippincott.

Mr. C. G. Miller, Mrs. C. G. Miller, Mr. Leland Netherton, Mrs. Albert Reitz, Mr. Irvin Sledge, Mrs. Floyd Spellmeyer, Mrs. Marilyn Steinman, Mrs. Elton Thackeray, Mr. T. D. Thackeray, and Mrs. Dayo Thompson also helped to compose histories and solicit sponsorships.

Clerical work was generously furnished by the following committee members: Mrs. Philip Arends, Mrs. Richard Arends, Mrs. Roger Arends, Mrs. William Arends, Mrs. W. E. Beck, Mrs. Emerson Busick, Mrs. John Clark, and Mrs. Harry Deffley.

Also giving assistance were: Mrs. Delmar Ehmen, Mrs. Claude Freehill, Mrs. Michael Freehill, Mrs. Kenneth Gravlin, Mrs. J. M. Kinsella, Mrs. Gerald Lackey, Miss Chris Mabry, and Mrs. Leslie Markwalder, Mrs. Ed Milligan. Mrs. Emerson Muehlenpfort, Mrs. Richard Siders, Miss Jeanne Stenberg, Mrs. Kathy Thackeray, Mrs. Stan Wurzbarger, and Mrs. John Zander complete the clerical committee.

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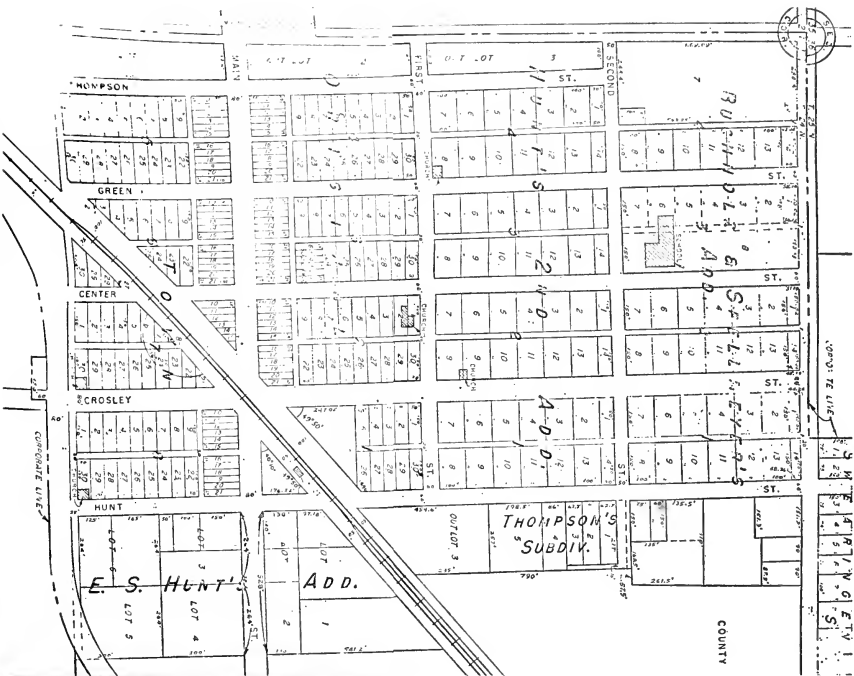
Styles of the day are reflected in this picture of Mary Kenney, Fred Steinman, Henry Steinman, and Steinman, standing, and seated, Carrie Shafer, Elizabeth Buchholz and .



Mr. C. W. Hicks beside a 1937 Ford with a V-8 engine.

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ROBERTS EXCHANGE BANK,  
ROBERTS, ILL.



BUSINESS SECTION AT ROBERTS, ILL.

The Roberts Exchange Bank (pictured above) was owned and operated by Mr. J. B. Meserve from 1872-1879, by Mr. Christopher Anderson from 1879-1917, and by Mr. R. E. Chambers from 1917-1920. At the same time Mr. J. P. Smith operated the bank pictured on the right from 1895-1920. In 1920 both of these banks were consolidated in the Roberts State Bank.

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